

L E T T E R S

TO A

YOUNG LADY,



ON

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

LETTER

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LETTER



*H. Andrews*

L E T T E R S

TO A

YOUNG LADY,

ON A VARIETY OF

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS,

CALCULATED TO

IMPROVE THE HEART, TO FORM THE MANNERS,  
AND ENLIGHTEN THE UNDERSTANDING:

IN TWO VOLUMES:

BY THE REV. JOHN BENNETT,

*Author of Strictures on Female Education,*

"That our Daughters may be as polished Corners of the Temple."

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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VOL. II.

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LONDON:

Printed for T. CADELL, Junior, and W. DAVIES,  
(Successors to Mr. CADELL) in the Strand.

M.DCC.XCV.

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YOUNG LADY,

ON A VARIETY OF

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS

SELECTED BY

EMERSON THE MISTRESS, TO FORM THE MISTRESS,  
AND ENLIGHTEN THE MISTRESS

IN TWO VOLUMES:

BY THE  
MISTRESS



As the only Daughter of the Crown of the Kingdom

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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

TO MISS LUCY

MY DEAR LUCY,

A WOMAN may be fairly allowed a little more attention to *ornament* than would be pardonable in the other sex. Nature, through all her works, has lavished more *external* brilliancy, colouring and plumage on the *female*. And though dress, in itself, is no *essential* quality, we are induced to judge more of your *real* character and disposition from it, than you are apt to imagine. We fancy it, in

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its

its different *modifications*, a mark of good sense, delicacy and discretion, or of the very opposite defects. Every sensible woman, therefore, will study it so far, as not to subject herself to unfavourable constructions. She will endeavour to convince every beholder, that she knows the proper *medium* betwixt a ridiculous *profusion*, and a total *want*, of ornament; that she can *tissue* plainness with elegance; that she does not wish to *seduce* by her appearance, but only to *please*; that she has cultivated her mind, much more than her person, and placed the highest value, not on the *outward*, perishable *casquet*, but the diamond *within*.

I rejoice that the good sense of my countrywomen has corrected some late *glaring* indecencies of dress. Young ladies should not be *too liberal* in the *display* of their charms. Too much *exposure* does not enhance their value. And it approaches, too nearly, to the manner of *those* women, whom they would



## YOUNG LADY.

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would surely think it no honour to resemble. Bosoms should throb *unseen*. The *bouffant* was an ornament of too *transparent* a kind. Wherever delicacy throws its modest drapery, *imagination* always lends inexpressible charms. As fine a woman, as the Venus of Medicis, would cease to be admired, if curiosity ceased to be *suspended*.

There is a great *neatness* in the dress of quakers, and of some other sectaries, who have copied their example. It has, however, more *primness*, than ease. In this respect, you have too much good sense to affect *singularity*. Religion consists in something more *substantial*, than any *particular* modes of appearance. And there is, if I mistake not, some *conceit* and *pride*, under this prodigious, *over-acted* plainness. Many, whom these narrow-minded persons would sentence, perhaps, to torments, for being elegantly dressed, have hearts, that overflow with universal benevolence, and infinitely

more piety and goodness, than themselves.

You know what young lady I mean by *Emilia*. I do not know a person, that dresses better. She is singularly happy in her choice of *colours*. Like her virtues, they are of the soft and *shaded* kind, not the brilliant or the gaudy. I never saw her fine; but she never is *fantastick*. She is seldom splendid; but *neatness* is all her own. If she puts on only a ribbon, it is selected with all the exquisite modesty of her mind, and disposed of by the hands of taste. The graces always appear to have been in waiting for the few moments, that she ever suffers dress to take up her attention.

I very much admire the fashes, which, of late, have been so fashionable amongst young ladies. They give me the idea of a childish simplicity, innocence and ease. These, and *flowing ringlets* are on the system of *nature*. And nature will always please.

I am

I am sorry, however, to observe that these *girlish* ornaments should likewise have encircled the less delicate waists of some *married* women. There cannot be a more absurd or disgusting affectation. If I was not writing to ladies, I would be *humorous*. On such a subject, I could be *severe*. But some improper ideas might be suggested, and I will only say, that the sober, *aged* autumn, is never clad in the chearful livery of spring.

On the whole, my dear girl, as a reasonable creature, and as a christian, never suffer yourself to be led away by an *extravagant* fondness for dress. What is finery, compared with understanding? What is splendour, contrasted with reason? What is your body, but a *temporary* receptacle for an *immortal* mind? It is but the *casket*; the *jewel* is the soul. And how very low and poor in itself is the ambition of apparel? After all our efforts, we can never make it equal the beauty of lilies, or to vie with the exquisite tints of



the rose. Whatever you can spare, from such expence, to give to the poor, will be a *solid* treasure, when beauty is but dust and ashes, and when gaiety is forgotten.

## L E T T E R II.

POLITENESS, if supposed, like Lord Chesterfield's, to be made up of *dissimulation*, or to consist in a number of ceremonious attitudes or fulsome compliments, without any meaning, is ridiculously frivolous; but on the other hand, if it springs from principle, from a real desire of pleasing, and is directed to its proper ends, it is, at least, a most amiable quality, if it does not rank in the number of the virtues. In the intercourse of life, and the present state of society, this good breeding is necessary to our own peace, and to that of others. It prevents a  
thousand



thousand inquietudes, irritations, offences; it diffuses an innocent pleasure, and it diffuses it *every moment*. We daily converse with many persons, considerably *indifferent* to us, and from whom we expect neither services nor obligations, who, yet, have it in their power, by a rough, ungracious manner, by unguarded sayings, or speaking (as it is called,) *their minds*, essentially to hurt our feelings, sour our spirits, give us a bad *head-ach*, or to break our rest; there are as many, on the other hand, who look up to *us* for no *essential* favours, whom, yet, in *our* turn, we may, not a little, irritate and distress, by a want of civility, by any *hauteur* or superciliousness in our looks or carriage, or a withholding of those kind attentions, which, on every principle of reason, humanity and civilization, are reciprocally due from every human creature to another.

This reasoning, still more forcibly, applies to members of the *same* family;

to wives and husbands; children and parents; brothers and sisters. If this kind of good breeding be ever violated amongst *them*, the consequence is coldness, quarrels, and gradual *aversion*.

So great, indeed, is the influence of true politeness over the mind, that even favours conferred in an *unpleasing* manner *without* it, become an insupportable insult; whilst a refusal, *softens* by it, into an obligation, and is, sometimes, made the basis of a lasting gratitude, affection or esteem.

This grace may be defined the art of being easy ourselves, in company, and of making all others easy about us. It is the proper medium betwixt the total want of, and an officious, over-acted, civility. It consists in a general, *indiscriminate* attention; in doing little civil offices, and saying obliging things to all the parties we converse with; in accommodating ourselves, as well as the conversation, to their particular tastes, habits, and

and inclinations; in keeping every offensive subject and idea out of view; in never glancing at *our own* affairs, and always paying the minutest regard to those of others; in *annihilating*, as it were, ourselves, and as studiously exalting all that are about us.

If I have not much mistaken, the best rules for it will be found in that religion, which requires us to "love one another; "to be gentle and courteous; to avoid "offences; to become *innocently* all things "to all men; in honour to prefer one "another, and to esteem others better "than ourselves."

The *exteriors* of good breeding, such as *presenting* yourself gracefully, entering or quitting a room with ease, a proper gait, air, gesture, &c. I am not, at present, considering. *These* are only acquired by *early* education, habits of good company, or by a *general* intercourse with the world; and though *they* may be wanting, I will venture to say, that the person will always

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please,



please, and always be respected, who possesses only this principle *within*.

True politeness gives a *lustre* to all our good qualities. It is a sovereign *enamel* to all the virtues, and proportionably extends our power of doing good. Learning, riches, station, talents, genius, *without* it, are overbearing and insufferable, or at least may be very *awkward* and unpleasant. They resemble a rich, *unfinished* picture, thrown into a *dark* and an *unpleasant* room. Politeness gives them the last touch, raises them into a proper light, and clothes them with the most beautiful drapery.

*Religion* itself has often suffered for want of this grace. Good people have not, always, been gentle, courteous or well bred; and an odium has been fixed on their profession, which has deterred many from becoming converts.

Many bad men, on the other hand, by a *pleasing* manner, have so successfully varnished over their *vices*, as to have acquired a considerable reputation. Their crimes



crimes have been forgotten in their politeness. Can I mention a stronger argument to recommend this accomplishment? We should not, surely, for want of a little care, "suffer our good to be evil spoken of."

## LETTER III.

**I**T is a great unhappiness to *many* ladies of *fortune*, that they have not sufficient employment to fill up their time; and in order to prevent that languor and *ennui*, which are the most unpleasant feelings of human life, either fall into a low state of spirits, or have recourse to play, publick pleasures, or a *perpetual* round of *visits*, for their amusement.

The religious exercises, however, and the studies, I have recommended, will not only occupy *your* hours in a rational and useful manner, but *some* of them, from their very nature, will become an inexhaustible source of the purest pleasure.

Still *uniformity* in any one pursuit, however pleasing, will exhaust the spirits, and they will frequently want a relief. The eye could not *constantly* behold, without injury, the most beautiful landscape. It may, perhaps, be the privilege of *angels* and superior spirits, to serve their Maker without weariness or distraction; but a mind, united to a body of *clay*, must have very frequent intervals of *languor*, and want as many of, *intermission*.

Innocent relaxation is as much a part of true wisdom, as employment itself. Indeed it is necessary to fit us for our duties. The earth itself would not be able to vegetate and shoot forth into all the bloom and verdure of spring, if it did not regain its exhausted powers during the sombrous leisure of the winter.

The rule is, we should amuse ourselves, in order to *live*, in the *true* sense of the word, and not live to be *amused*. Relaxation, conducted on *this* principle, will never occupy too great a share of our time or attention. It will be consistent

sistent with the universal principle of  
“doing all things to the glory of God.”

A woman's amusements should, as much as possible, be *domestick*; and her own walls will present many excellent opportunities of such a nature. The exercise of parental or filial affection is a source of *heart-felt* and refined pleasure. Intercourses of tenderness betwixt branches of the same family, and the little engaging attentions they create, stimulate the finer movements of the body, and give play to all the refreshing emotions. A *mother*, in particular, must have these *natural* delights in *perfection*. Her heart must vibrate, with an exquisite fondness, to the playful graces of a little offspring, and their continually unfolding charms.

Exercise in the open air, is another great amusement. Fresh breezes, variety of objects, gentle motion, and all the charming pictures of nature cheer the mind, and invigorate the spirits. The  
sedentary

sedentary life of women is the parent of many fashionable complaints; weak nerves, low spirits, vapours, hystericks, languors. No constitution can long withstand the bad effects of luxury and inaction. Such people may *exist*, but they cannot *live*.

In a rich entertainment, Mr. Addison saw fevers, dropfies, gouts and rheumatisms in embryo. Who, that looks at women, emaciated with *midnight* pleasures, and pale for want of exercise and air, must not behold the seeds of infinite disorders, and likewise tremble for the rising generation?

The ancients paid a very nice attention to the constitution of females. To give them, in *particular situations*, every degree of firmness, was not thought beneath the attention of those great men, who by their eloquence and valour, astonished the world.

Attention to a *garden* is a truly *feminine* amusement. If you mix it with a taste  
for



for botany and a knowledge of plants and flowers, you will never be in want of an excellent restorative. Our first parents are described by Milton, as tending the shrubs and flowers of their paradise, with unceasing assiduity, and as rising with the dawn to work,

Amongst sweet dews and flow'rs, where any row  
Of fruit trees over woody, reach'd too far  
Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check  
Fruitless embraces, or they lead the vine  
To wed her elm. - - - -

There is an inexpressible *tranquillity* in a garden, which sooths the spirits into that kind of chearful pensiveness, which is, perhaps, the right temperature of the moral constitution. Our Saviour often resorted to a garden. Innocence and piety found it the happiest place for meditation and repose. It is impossible, indeed, to have a richer blessing, than a taste for the *general* beauties of nature. It is an inexhaustible fund of pleasure within *every* person's reach; it purifies  
and

and refines the mind, and raises it above the *artificial* gaieties, which are purchased with so great an expence of time, money, and, often, of *constitution*.

O bless'd of heav'n, whom not the languid songs  
Of luxury, the firen, not the bribes  
Of sordid wealth, nor all the gaudy sports  
Of pageant honours can seduce to leave  
These ever-blooming sweets, which, from the store  
Of *nature*, fair Imagination culls  
To charm th' enliven'd soul. - - - - -

Thus the men,  
Whom nature's works can charm, with God *himself*  
Hold converse, grow *familiar* day by day  
With his conceptions, act upon *his* plan,  
And form to *his*, the relish of *their*, souls.

But *friendship*, after all, is the great *medicine* of life. We were born for society, and the mind never so effectually unburdens itself, as in the conversation of a well chosen friend. Happy the woman, who finds such a treasure! "It is more precious, than thousands of gold or silver."

Great care, indeed, judgment, taste and vigilance are absolutely necessary to direct you in the choice. A *strict* friendship is adopting,

adopting, as it were, the sentiments, the manners, the morals, and, almost, the *happiness* or misery of others. *Religion* should guide you on this occasion. None but a *good* person is *capable* of true attachment, and, I trust, with *you* no other would assimilate. If you can meet with such a character, who, at the same time, has a liberal and cultivated mind, you are rich indeed!

*Sincere* friendships are, most generally, formed at an *early* age. The heart, in this tender season, is soft and unsuspecting. It is amazing how the little tumults of life *afterwards* jostle us *against*, and put us out of humour and conceit with, one another. Sensibility becomes petrified by age and observation. Ambition, avarice, and little paltry competitions, freeze up the generous current of the soul.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

PUBLICK pleasures are esteemed and called the amusements of women. But I think them far from answering the name. In fact they *agitate*, rather than *relieve*, and are more frequently sources of vexation, than repose. Superior rivals eclipse; fancied friends are inattentive, and the gaiety of the scene has no connection with the quiet of the heart. The time, money, and *preparation* they require, are a serious consideration, and their *frequency* renders them a *business*; instead of *preserving* health, they undermine and destroy it. Late hours, hot rooms, and an agitated mind are unfavourable to rest; and the God of sleep will not *long* be defrauded of his rights, without *retaliating* the offence.

What



What we *call* pleasure, is but a splendid and a voluntary *service*. If it had not the *name* of amusement, we should *shrink* from it, as an intolerable burden.

Who are so great slaves as the votaries of fashion? What requires more *systematical* diligence, than the watching of every varying mode of dress, and "catching" these living manners, as they rise?"

Of *all* women, they who call themselves fashionable, are the most *unhappy*; ever idly busy; ever vainly agitated; their peace depends on a whisper, on a look, or a thousand, little emulations, too ridiculous to be mentioned! They dread a private moment, more than an assassin, and with very great reason; they cannot glance into *themselves* with comfort; they cannot look into *eternity* with hope! Reason suggests, that they were born for something higher, and there *are* moments, when *conscience* will be heard. How unheeded are the cries and prattle of their infants! How unhappy must be the

the man, who has received from such women, vows which they will not perform, of fidelity and of attachment!

After all, it is only in the practice of virtue; it is only in *domestick* life, that lies all the *solid*, because all the *untumultuous*, joy.

## LETTER V.

IT would be uncomfortable to *yourself* to live wholly *alone* in the midst of society; and to *others*, it would carry the appearance of great pride, or conceit, or singularity. As we were born to be *citizens of the world*, we feel ourselves uncomfortable, when we are not in the exchange of little civilities with people about us; and they, in their turn, contract unpleasant piques and prejudices against

against us. Mixing with company has certainly the good effect of promoting benevolence, and preventing many little shynesses and misconstructions. Nay, even the lightest and most insignificant conversation has a tendency to relieve intense thoughtfulness, and keep the mind from preying too much upon itself.

*Tea parties* are the *general* mode of society, amongst ladies. And you must give into them, in some degree, if you will cultivate *any* acquaintance with people of fortune. *Some* of your sex spend their time in a *continual* rotation of these visits, and have so many *preconcerted* engagements on their hands, as require a very orderly arrangement upon paper. But this is a most useless and insipid life; and, where there is a *family*, cannot fail to interfere with many duties of far higher importance. The time, that is taken up in *dress* alone, and the money it requires, are a prodigious sacrifice.

Nor

Nor in the light of *amusement* alone, is this *continual* visiting to be much recommended. It affords neither air nor exercise, and, frequently, not much agreeable or useful conversation. The generality of men are so much *undomesticated*, so lost to every thing, that is innocent in taste, or natural in pleasure, that *they* are but seldom to be met with in these parties.

A group of beautiful females are, not unfrequently, seen together, without one single person of the other sex, to share the enjoyment; and it is, I conceive, in mixed companies *alone*, that conversation has its proper *interest*, flavour or improvement.

Your visits, therefore, I trust, will be, comparatively, rare, and nicely selected; and I hope you will always preserve yourself from the reproach, that is generally thrown on these meetings, as being vehicles of gossiping and scandal. It has been objected to your sex, that they are prone to *satire*. At a certain *age*, and  
under



under some *disappointments*, perhaps this is true. They have been collecting, for many years, a quantity of spleen, and imprudently discharge it on every person, that falls in their way. This renders a woman *unlovely* indeed. Nay the attempt at *wit*, or saying *smart* things, is, by no means, to be encouraged. *True* humour is the lot of few, and can *never* be an advantage to a *woman*. From *her* we expect the qualities that please, sooth and enliven. Unfortunately they, who think themselves in possession of this weapon, are brandishing it *indiscriminately* on all occasions, so as sometimes to wound their very *nearest* friends. If you could really say the *smartest* things, you might be *feared*, but you never would be *loved*.

The *curiosity* of women is a *proverbial* object of satire, and gives birth to all that little gossiping, which I have reprobated. Never convince the world, by an attention to mere trifles, that you  
have

have so unfurnished a mind, or so little to engage it. Read Hayley's truly humorous "Essay on Old Maids," and blush at the practice. Remember the fate of the poor unhappy *spinster*, who caught her death by her immoderate curiosity.

You can surely find infinite subjects for the entertainment of an *hour*, without *descending* to these *little* things. If you *cannot*, it is high time to give up (what is only *called*,) an amusement, for that, which is a *real* one, a walk, a ride, a book, a garden, or the society of a chosen friend.

It is astonishing into how many difficulties a woman betrays herself, who is fond of this practice; what quarrels, misconstructions and explanations, what secret shynesses, averfions, mischiefs such *babblers* create; what friends they separate, and what a badge of infamy they fix upon themselves, in the eyes of all the sensible and the good!

There

There was a famous school amongst the ancients, where the pupils spent several years in learning the very necessary art of being *silent*. Remember, my dear girl, that nature has given you *two* ears, and only *one* tongue; and that scripture has said, "be swift to hear, but slow to speak."

## LETTER VI.

CARDS, which are the inseparable concomitants of tea visits, and introduced as soon as persons are well seated in company, are a very equivocal pleasure, and, by no means, to be much recommended. Little habits insensibly beget a *passion* for them; and a passion for cards murders time, money, talents, understanding, every thing, that is rational in our nature, and every thing, that is divine.

If experience did not convince us of the fact, one should never have imagined, that a *reasonable* creature would ever have been able to consume hours, days, weeks, months, years, in *counting over* the black and red spots upon paper, and, childishly to quarrel about their success — a creature, who has an understanding, that is capable of improvement, to an infinite degree! a creature, living in a world, where knowledge is immense, and every flower or shrub a subject of astonishment—who has a temper, that requires continual watchfulness; a soul that needs unremitting cultivation; perhaps children, that call for incessant instruction; amidst objects of distress, for which *heaven* begs each *superfluous* penny, and in a body, that may, *any moment*, drop into the grave!

I will advert, no longer, to the *moral* consequences. A woman, who has a wish only to *please*, should not be much addicted to this practice. It is very apt



to ruffle the temper, and *discompose the features*; and a sour or an angry look is more destructive to *female* charms, than an high scorbutick flush, or the small pox.

It is said in favour of cards, that they prevent *scandal*, and are a substitute to many, for the want of conversation. This conveys a severe stigma both on our hearts and understanding. It supposes, that we have few stores of entertainment *within* ourselves; and that the only way to avoid a *greater* crime, is to fall into a *less*. Our moments, I fear, will not bear the scrutiny of conscience or reason, much less of the great day, if we cannot contrive to spend them in an innocent and useful manner, without the *low* resource of either *scandal* or *play*!

## LETTER VH.

**T**HE *defenders* of cards, however, will say nothing in favour of *gaming*. No fortune, they know, is equal to its extravagant demands. An unlucky throw loses thousands in a moment. It has reduced the most opulent families to indigence; it has led some to forgery, and an ignominious death; others, whose pride would not brook the *degradation*, to the fatal act of suicide; at best it has plunged into poverty and distress, many heirs of honourable and illustrious houses, who were born, in all *appearance* to *happier* days.

Your *moderate* card-players (as they call themselves,) have often wondered, what can tempt people of fortune to such a dreadful and ruinous amusement, as that of *gaming*. I will venture to say, that  
this

this shocking practice is nothing more, than the spirit of card-playing, carried to its *extreme*; that equal temptations would probably have led *them* to the very same imprudence; that they both, *generally*, originate in the same principle, (the want of something substantial to fill and exercise the mind,) and are only an *artificial* method of destroying that *ennui* and languor, which are the most insupportable feelings of human life; and that the cure of *both* must, equally, spring from solid knowledge, and from solid virtue.

Though gaming, at *first*, rises from no worse a principle, than a want of amusement, or of having something to call the passions into exercise, yet, in its *consequences*, it has a tendency to eradicate every religious and moral disposition, every social duty, every laudable and virtuous affection. It renders the mind *selfish* in the extreme, and callous to the touch of woe, in every shape;

whilst it stops up the *fluices* of charity, it extinguishes the *inclination* for it; it is deaf to every call of friendship or of prudence. There can be no such thing, as an attentive parent, mother, wife, brother, sister, or a sympathizing heart, where this infernal rage has taken possession of the soul. Every thing else is swallowed up in the *all-devouring* vortex. A gamester would stake the last thousand on a throw, though a *prison* for her *husband*, *rags* for her *children*, or a *gallows* for her nearest *friend*, were the melancholy prospect!

If you disbelieve *this* reasoning, look into life. What effects has this passion *gradually* produced on women, who had *once* hearts full of tenderness and virtue, and were affected with every appearance of distress; who had, *from nature*, every refinement of taste, and every elegance of manners to captivate and charm?

If it were not invidious, I could produce many *living* characters to support  
my



my assertions. They would make a dismal picture, and the motto would be, "beware of beginnings."

Though I abhor novels, yet, perhaps, the celebrated one of Cecilia is worth reading, if it was only to guard our fashionable ladies from splitting on the dreadful rock of the Harrels. Many characters, in that book, are over-strained; but *this* is borrowed from real life, and daily observation.

## LETTER VIII.

**L**AY down a little plan for yourself, and all your studies, exercises and employments will be easy and practicable. You will have time for every thing; and you will never seem in an hurry or *embarrassed*.

*Order* is the first law of nature, and of nature's God. The moon, stars and

tides vary not a moment, and the sun knoweth the "hour of its going down."

Without order, a thousand things will be improperly delayed, or wholly neglected. Whilst we are hesitating where to *begin*, or *what* to do, hours fly away, *insensibly*, never to return!

If every thing knows its place, you will escape the loss of many, valuable moments, and the anxiety of as many unprofitable searches. *Exactness* is, by no means, the *necessary* appendage of an old maid.

Order is the very parent of *tranquillity*. A person is always easy, whose affairs are, always, in a *regular* arrangement. At the same time, let the *mechanism* of your process be *invisible*. The perfection of art, you know, is to *conceal* it.

Be always ready to receive your friends with an open countenance, and a chearful heart. Society and connection have claims upon us, to which we should sacrifice every *selfish* consideration.

If

If you are an *early riser*, you may find time for *every* thing. It is amazing how much is gained by lopping off an hour or two, from indulgence in the *morning*. Nor is the mere saving of time the only advantage. Our spirits are more lively, and our faculties are more awake,

I do not know a practice, which I should *more* recommend, whether devotion, health, beauty, or improvement of the mind, were the objects in view. How chearful and how animated are the meditations of the morning! What a delightful bloom flushes into the cheeks from its balmy exhalations! What an unspeakable chearfulness glides into the soul from hearing the devotional matins of the lark, and from beholding the new-born scenery of nature! How necessary is such a regimen to preserve that sweetness of complexion, and of breath, which are the very essence and *perfume* of beauty! When people think of accounting to God for the talents,

C 5

they

they have received, they overlook the hours, which are lost in morning sloth, and *unreasonable* indulgence.

I have inured myself, for many years, to this habit of early rising. In the spring months of April and May, particularly, I grudge every moment that is wasted after five. I consider it as a rude neglect to all those sweets, which opened to salute me. And I always find so much more deducted from the firmness of my health, and the vigour of my understanding.

#### LETTER IX.

I HAVE indeed, as you say, frequently dwelt with pleasure on Miss Louisa —, and do think her a charming woman. She always struck me as possessing, in a superior degree, those qualities, which constitute the *graceful and attractive,*



*attractive*, and therefore as a very proper pattern to all young people. Not that I think a servile imitation of *any* original, however excellent, would render *another* pleasing. Nature no more intended any two persons to have precisely the same *manner*, than the same eyes, or features, or complexion. But still a *familiar* intimacy with such a woman must *insensibly* communicate some traits of resemblance, which by incorporating with the *general* mass of a character, will form a beautiful and consistent whole.

Though I have always admired her only in the *gross*, and was charmed, without considering the constituent principles of her excellence, I will, as you request it, endeavour to *analyze* and trace them to their source.

Her person is rather *genteel*, than beautiful, so that she is more indebted to herself, than to nature, for her attractions. And a wonderful energy indeed they have. For I have often seen this

girl steal the notice of the whole company from others of her sex, who were infinitely more distinguished by the beauty of their persons, as well as the advantage of birth and fortune.

The *ground-work* of all her charms, is, (what I cannot call by a better name, than that of,) simplicity; an artless, undesigning, *unstudied* manner, flowing from an innocent and virtuous heart, which, never seeks *concealment*, as having indeed *nothing* to conceal. Louisa never affects to be any thing, but what she *is*. She does not *exalt* herself above measure, nor ever ridiculously degrades herself, in order to be *exalted*. Her gestures, attitude, voice, pronunciation are all under the immediate impression and guidance of *nature*. Louisa *expresses* an innocent pleasure, because she *feels* it, in the company of sensible and agreeable men, and yet never seeks it with an improper avidity. She never harangues upon, or vaunts a *superior* sensibility, but frequently

quently displays no *inconsiderable* share of it, by *involuntary* emotions. She never, in any respect, affects connections, appearance or any thing *above* her fortune, nor endeavours to shine at the expence of others.

This, though very imperfectly described, is, according to my idea, the first excellence in the character of this lady. It is the very reverse of that absurd affectation, which, by assuming a thousand, *fanciful* shapes, renders graces unlovely, and even beauty disgusting. Louisa charms every person because she is *always* amiable and obliging without *studying* to charm. Her face is always welcome in company, though she throws no *artificial* lightning into her eyes, softness into her features, nor *lipping* into her articulation.

The common *systematick* education of girls is unfavourable to this simplicity. The tendency of *modern* culture is to raise art, upon the ruins of nature. Such  
a method



a method would not succeed in any thing *else*, and how should it in the treatment of women? If there be one object in the world, more disgusting than all others, it is a girl, whom nature formed to be innocent and artless, reducing affectation and disguise to a *system*.

It is with simplicity of manner, as it is with ease of style, in a writer. When we read his works, it appears the most *easy* attainment imaginable; but, in fact, nothing is so *uncommon*, either in conduct or in writings. And the reason must be, that, instead of attending to the guidance of nature, people make an extraordinary effort to be something *great*, or *superior*, and *uncommon*. Simplicity may be styled the *easy* and the graceful *negligence* of conduct, yet, as in dress, it charms more than the most elaborate ornaments.

Through all the wonderful works of God there is a majestick simplicity. Nature knows no *affectation*. Her prospects,  
hills,



hills, vallies, alcoves, grottos are all unstudied; her magnificence is wild and artless. There is a simplicity of design and effect in all her wonders, in the construction and revolution of planets, in the flow and ebbing of the tides, and in the vomiting of immense volcanos. The carnation never aims at the stately magnificence of the ostentatious holy-oak. Every rose is content with its own natural hues and odours; and affects not the elegant sweetness of the Reseda, (mignionette).

*Nature* is the standard of *perfection*. Every character and every art is only so far finished, as it approaches to her likeness. No paintings are beautiful without this ground-work of *simplicity*. It charms in a Correggio. It was the excellence of a Raphael. It lives in the exquisite touches of a Reynolds.

The beauty of all *writing* is founded in simplicity. It was with Homer, Virgil and Milton, when they sketched out their  
their

the inimitable poems. Of Shakespeare it was the very soul. Statuaries, sculptors, architects have only gained an extensive reputation, in proportion as they have studied this *divine* simplicity.

No woman can be graceful without it. It will go further, in the art of pleasing, without *any* accomplishments, than *all* the accomplishments will go, without it.

#### LETTER X.

**A**NOTHER striking quality in Louisa, is her constant *cheerfulness*. Though few women in the world are more serious or thoughtful, where any *solid* duties are concerned, where the health, peace, comfort, convenience of her friends and parents, or any *domestick* attentions are at stake, and though she is possessed of such an exquisite sensibility,

as is apt to produce an unevenness of spirits, yet, whenever I see this lovely girl, she always beguiles me into a *temporary* cheerfulness, by the force of her own. This gaiety of heart, equally removed from a thoughtless levity or a moping gloom, is a most desirable quality in women. *Men* are perplexed with various anxieties of business and ambition, and are naturally more thoughtful, profound, and melancholy; women certainly were formed to *sooth and to enliven*. It is one of the greatest blessings we derive from their society, and from the most sacred of all connections.

Cheerfulness (saith the wise man) doeth good, like a medicine. It has a wonderful effect on all the finer organs of the body. If it was not for little innocent fallies of this kind, it would be impossible to bear severe application. The year would be insupportable, if it was wholly composed of the dark and gloomy days of November.

There

There are many *unavoidable* ills, sicknesses and misfortunes in human life, which will come *uncalled* to deject our spirits, and poison our repose; but we should not *anticipate* them by gloomy apprehensions, nor ever suffer an *unnecessary* melancholy to sit upon our looks. It is the truest policy to be *innocently* gay and chearful, whilst we *can*. It forbids the approach of wrinkles, and adds many years to the little fleeting span of human life. Some pietists have encouraged gloom by their erroneous notions of the Deity, and of christian self-denial. But I should strongly suspect their goodness, or their judgment. If *any* thing can make a person truly cheerful, it should be a *good conscience*. And true religion is doubly charming, when it wears a *smile*.

A melancholy countenance is, by no means, *feminine*. It is as remote from the true point of gracefulness, in the sex, as ill-natured wit, or ironical pertness.

LETTER



## LETTER XI.

THOUGH Louisa is the most remote from *prudery*, of any woman I know, easy and accessible to the other sex, and cheerful, lively and *unconstrained*, in her conversation with them, yet she has really so great a share of *true*, female delicacy, that the most licentious man living would not dare to use a *double entendre* in her company, or give the conversation an improper turn. Nor is it, that she has reduced rules of propriety to a system. She has really a *native* feeling, which vibrates to the most distant touch of what is proper and becoming, and would tremble, like the sensitive plant, where any thing, that could stain the delicacy of her *mind*,  
was

was conveyed in the most *distant* allusion.

Fashionable manners have been long attempting to banish delicacy, as a sort of *incumbrance*; but no woman will ever *long* be lovely without it. Let France or Italy do what they will, it is that sacred fence, which is never broken down, without melancholy consequences. Delicacy is a very general and *comprehensive* quality. It extends to every thing, where woman is concerned. Conversation, books, pictures, attitude, gesture, pronunciation, should all be under its salutary restraints. If a girl ever loses it, "farewell, a long "farewell to all her greatness!" If this "salt have lost its favour, wherewith "shall it be seasoned?"

How unfit are many parents to educate daughters! What injudicious pleasantries do they sometimes use, even in their presence! A girl should *bear*, she should *see*, nothing, that can call forth a blush, or even stain the *purity* of her mind.

*Another*

*Another distinguishing grace of Louisa is softness. She is (what nature intended her to be,) wholly a woman. She has a quality, that is the direct opposite to manliness and vigour. Her voice is gentle; her pronunciation delicate; her passions are never suffered to be boisterous: she never talks politicks: she never foams with anger: she is seldom seen in any masculine amusements: she does not practise archery. I will venture to prophesy, that she will never canvass for votes at an election. I never saw her in an unfeminine dress, or her features discomposed with play. She really trembles with the apprehension of danger. She feels, unaffectedly, for every person, exposed to it. A friend, leaving her father's house, only for a short time, calls forth her concern. The farewell tear stands big in its transparent sluice. And whenever he returns, the easy, undissembled smile testifies her joy. She displays more sympathy for the indisposition of a*  
*servant,*

*servant*, than some do for the *death* of their nearest *friend*.

Of all the women I ever saw, Louisa has the most universal and indiscriminate *affability*. She never meets any poor persons in her neighbourhood, without entering into a very minute inquiry about the health of their children, family and friends; and the villagers *revere* her. They know that she is constantly planning for them some assistance and relief.

*Little* minds endeavour to support a consequence by *distance* and *hauteur*. But this is a mistake. *True* dignity arises from condescension, and is supported by noble actions.

Superciliousness is almost a certain mark of low birth, and ill breeding. People, who have just emerged into greatness, think it necessary to maintain their superiority by a proud look and an high stomach. The consequence is *general* hatred and contempt.

In



In fact this proud, *high-bearing* reserve is a very great *crime*. Every person, that bears the image of his Maker, is entitled to our attentions, and indeed our benevolence. Inferiority is, of *itself*, a sufficient burden, without our endeavouring to *aggravate* it by ill-nature or neglect.

I have often heard Louisa dwell, with rapture, on the entertainment and *edification* she has received in many *cottages*, when she has been carrying clothing, cordials or money to the distressed inhabitants; and tell me which is the more dignified character? a woman, who would turn from her poor neighbours with disdain; or one, who for her kindness and attention to them, is praised, as often as her name is mentioned, and followed, whithersoever she moveth, with their tears and with their blessings?

There is not a greater charm in any character, than such a *condescension*. A woman, thus forgetting all her distinctions,

tions, to sympathize with the unfortunate, must captivate every man, who has either a single grain of piety or understanding. Even the *plainest face* would be forgotten in such real and unaffected goodness.

The *manner* of Louisa *finishes* her character. It is a beautiful bordering to all her graces and her virtues. It is impossible for me to define, (what I mean by,) manner; yet no one can be, half an hour, in the company of this lady, without feeling its astonishing effects. Though she frequently says nothing, but what might have dropped from any other person, yet in *her* it becomes so very interesting, as to command attention, and even to delight. She embellishes, in a wonderful manner, a look, a gesture, an attitude, nay even silence itself. She confers a grace on the most *common* civility. She heightens every favour by the *mode* of doing it, and she obliges, almost, by *refusal*.

The

The best definition I can give of this quality must be imperfect. I should call it, however, a quick discernment of what is graceful, directed by an exquisite sensibility, and saying in an instant, to airs, gestures, features, looks, come with corresponding energy, and they "come." No rules can be laid down for its attainment. Nature must have been propitious, where it is seen in any high perfection.

*Manner* is more engaging, than the most finished beauty. The latter is an agreeable prospect, that soon grows insipid, and fatigues by *uniformity*. The first is a continual change of country, with landscapes ever new, interesting and delicious.

## LETTER XII.

THE father of Louisa is one of the most worthy clergymen, I ever knew, and has long lived in my esteem. He married, early in life, a woman of considerable beauty and fortune, but infinitely more distinguished by her *piety* and *understanding*. He has learning and goodness enough to have graced the highest stations in the church; but he suffers not ambition to disturb his tranquillity, and prefers the silent pleasures of retirement to all the pomp and splendour of a court. He is rector of a small parish in the county of ———, and has such a pastoral tenderness and affection for his flock, that I do not think he would be tempted to leave them for any temporal considerations whatsoever. “I  
“ would not resign (he has frequently said  
“ to



“to me) the fragrant shrubs and plants  
“that encircle this little cot for the most  
“enviable promotions; nor should the  
“tumults and anxieties of the highest  
“station deprive me of those *domestick* en-  
“dearments, which, after all its bewitch-  
“ing gaiety and bustle, are the only *real*  
“sweetners of life. What could equal  
“the heart-felt joys I derive from the  
“fond and ever *growing* attachment of  
“my Harriett, or the pleasure of watching  
“the continually expanding graces and  
“improvements of my lovely girl?”

It has, long, been my private opinion,  
that a good clergyman is more likely to  
have a dutiful and affectionate family,  
than a person of almost any other cha-  
racter. And I am not a little confirmed  
in it by the instance before us.

Whoever sees this happy pair, is de-  
lighted with that mutual esteem and  
fondness, which revolving years have  
not been able to diminish, but only to  
mature; and must form a very high

idea of that union, which the *licentious* only endeavour to ridicule, because they have not taste and innocence enough for its *unpurchased* and refined sweets. I have lately spent a few days with this amiable group, and returned, quite disgusted with my own situation. It appeared, uncommonly *solitary and insipid*. I began to blame my books, as the obstacle of my felicity, and to ask philosophy and cold-hearted prudence, what joy they had to boast, if compared with these *natural* transports of the soul.

Fortunately for my friend, a comfortable, *paternal* fortune, in conjunction with that, which he received with his lady, has placed him in very easy, and rather affluent, circumstances. Providence has crowned their virtuous friendship only with Louisa; but indeed, in her alone, has rained down a *profusion* of its blessings. In her, therefore, all their cares and anxieties concenter; and her education,

you

you may well suppose, has not been neglected.

Her parents are both averse to boarding schools, as inspiring a young person with improper notions, and undermining the taste for pure simplicity and domestick worth. She has, therefore, been always kept under their own, immediate inspection; but her hours are as strictly arranged, as they could have been, at any school, into a *regular* plan of employment. She has her allotted intervals for domestick duties, needle work, reading, correspondence, exercise and recreation; and every hour knows its particular engagement.

She opens every morning, and closes every day with an hymn of praise to her bountiful Creator, which is chanted, to the harpsichord, with so sweet a voice, as I cannot, even at this distance of time, recollect without emotion.

If you saw the beautiful *fancy work*, which has been wrought by this girl, in  
D 3                      carpets,

carpets, baskets of flowers, embroidery, &c. you would imagine, that she could have but little leisure for the improvement of her understanding. But a strict *economy* of time, an invariable adherence to *order*, and an habit of *early rising* have enabled her to do wonders. Her father superintends that part of her education, which is connected with books; and has such an happy method of conveying his ideas, as wonderfully mixes instruction with delight.

Natural history and botany, on fine days, they study in the *fields*; and when the weather is less favourable, she has such a collection of animals, insects, and other curiosities as would adorn the museum of a connoisseur. This is called her grotto; and is placed in a shady part of the garden, over-arched with an alcove of intertwined elms.

History, in the hands of her able instructor, becomes a fund of unspeakable improvement. When events are recorded,



recorded, she is asked what *causes* gave them birth; what *instruments* were made use of for their completion, and what traces, she can discover, of a wonderful and an all-wise Providence, governing the whole.

Geography and chronology are inseparable guides consulted on the occasion; and when *characters* are described, she is interrogated concerning the *praise-worthy* or the *reprehensible*, in them; where the historian has been too sparing of his praise, or extolled beyond the bounds of reason and of *truth*. Her sentiments, on all these subjects, are given, in her own language, upon paper; and afterwards corrected by the mature judgment and critical taste of her incomparable tutor.

On *Sundays*, she prepares a concise abridgment of the sermon, which undergoes the same rigid examination; and she has a little volume, filled with such sacred reflections, as would not dishonour

the understanding, or the repository of a professed divine.

You would suppose from *this* account, that Louisa would appear (what the world calls,) a very *learned woman*. No such thing. In a *mixed* company, you would not discern, that she possessed any superior knowledge or advantage over her sex, except in an elegant mode of expression. She enters into other people's views, feelings, interests and concerns, with a politeness, that very few possess; and converses with all her country neighbours, on such easy terms, as banish every unpleasing feeling of distance or restraint.

The heart of this lovely girl is, all over, *sympathy and softness*. The big tear trembles in her eye, on every trying occasion; and in her closet, along with a small, but well chosen collection of books, she has a little box, with this inscription, "sacred to the poor." Into *this*, she puts, every night, before she sleeps,

sleeps, something to be a fund for merit and distress. She enriches it with the savings she has made, by retrenching some expensive articles of dress or pleasure. It is filled with money, that others would have spent on plays, concerts or assemblies; and I will venture to say, that she has infinitely sweeter musick in her heart, and a more innocent, sparkling brilliance in her eyes, than any of the most admired frequenters of these gay amusements.

## LETTER XIII.

FROM Louisa's strict confinement and *systematick* life you would conclude, perhaps, that she had almost contracted a *disrelish* for books. But, indeed, it is far otherwise; her studies are her *pleasure*; they are so judiciously mixed with entertainment, and so inter-

woven, as it were, with the common, casual occurrences of the day, that she considers them more as an *amusement* than a *business*. Her private moments, when she is left to her own choice, are not unfrequently beguiled with the very same employments, which had engrossed the other parts of the day.

The garden is the scene, where she indulges all the luxury of her taste; and her rambles into it are as frequent, as the great variety of her avocations will permit. One day, I found her in this retirement. The place was very happily fancied. Large clumps of trees, on both sides, with their intervening foliage, had rendered it impervious to any human eye. Nature had wantoned with particular luxuriance. A clear, transparent spring murmured through the valley. And it was fenced, on both sides, with a very lofty mound, cast up as on purpose, and planted with perennial shrubs. A shady arbour, in the middle, catching  
through



through a beautiful vista, the spire of the village church, invited to meditation and to repose. She was reclined here rather, in a pensive attitude, reading Burke's "Essays on the Beautiful and Sublime;" and to me she appeared, I must confess, more enchanting, more *beautiful* and more *sublime*, than the admired work of that well known and admired author.

On another occasion, her mother being much indisposed, she had stolen from the domestick circle, to indulge, at leisure, a solitary grief. The book she held in her hands, was Lord Lyttelton's Dialogues of the Dead. The soft melancholy visible in her countenance, the very apparent agitation of her spirits, and the grief, bursting through her animated eyes, formed a very interesting whole; whilst her observations on a future life, on the comfort she derived from the hope of conversing with her friends after death; on the probable nature and

D 6                      happiness

happiness of heaven, and the permanency of virtuous friendship and affection, would not have disgraced any divine or philosopher of the age.

A *third* time of her elopement, she was reading the only novel, which she permits herself *to* read, that of Sir Charles Grandison. Tears, like an April shower, tinged with the sun, were mingled with her joy.

The book was opened, where the once amiable Harriett Byron is *now* Lady Grandison; where the painful suspense of her virtuous, though premature, attachment, is crowned by an eternal union with its object, and she is kneeling to her ever venerable grandmother, to implore a blessing. "Heavens!" (said she,) "what an exquisite and inimitable painter was Richardson! How overwhelmed with admiration, esteem and self-annihilation do I, always, feel myself, when I read the description of his Harriett Byron. So much piety, yet

“ yet so much cheerfulness; such filial  
“ duty, tenderness, affection, so exquisite a sensibility; so deep and glowing a passion, conducted with so much delicacy; such beauty of person, lost in so much greater sweetness of temper, and such a winning candour and openness of heart, complete my idea of every thing that is noble and amiable in woman.

“ I never read this writer without weeping. He had an amazing talent for the pathetick and descriptive. He opens all the sluices of tenderness, and tears flow down our cheeks, like a river. And (what is most of all,) I never open his book without feeling my sentiments elevated and sublimed, and my heart more alive to all the suggestions of piety and virtue. If *all* novels had been written on such a plan, they would, doubtless, have been very excellent vehicles of wisdom and goodness.”

The

The *last* time I broke in upon Louisa's retirement, she was *surrounded* with authors. She seemed bent upon indulging her elegant taste, in all its extravagance.

Addison's Papers on the "Pleasures of Imagination;" several miscellaneous pieces of Miss Seward; Mason's "English Garden;" "Ariosto," with Hoole's Translation, and Webb's "Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting," together with a Collection of Poems, lay, in promiscuous dignity, beside her. She has accustomed herself to enter into a sort of commonplace-book, passages, which she thinks particularly striking. I am happy in being able to give you a little specimen of her choice, for she indulged me with a sight of the valuable manuscript.

The first, poetical rose she had plucked, was from the Italian poet, Ariosto. It was his beautiful picture of Alcina, the enchantress. I will transcribe a few of the lines, and the translation, though a  
modest



modest blush tinged her cheeks, whilst I read the description.

Di persona era tanto ben formata,  
Quanto me finger fan pittori industri,  
Con bionda chioma lunga ed anodata;  
Oro non è, che più risplenda e lustri.  
Spargessi per la guancia delicata  
Misto color di rose, e di ligustri.

Her matchless person every charm combin'd,  
Fam'd in th' idea of a painter's mind.  
Bound in a knot, behind her ringlets roll'd  
Down her fair neck, and shone like waving gold:  
Her blooming cheeks the blendid tints disclose  
Of lilies, damask'd with the blushing rose, &c. &c.

From Lord Lyttelton's "Monody on his Lady," she had copied the following pathetick verses. Whilst I read them, she appeared amazingly affected.

O shades of Hagley, where is now your boast?  
Your bright inhabitant is lost;  
You she preferr'd to all the gay resorts,  
Where female vanity might wish to shine,  
The pomp of cities and the pride of courts:  
Her modest beauties shunn'd the public eye:  
To your sequester'd dales,  
And flow'r embroider'd vales,  
From an admiring world she chose to fly.  
With nature there retir'd and nature's God,  
The silent paths of wisdom trod,

And

And banish'd ev'ry passion from her breast,

But those, the gentlest and the best,  
Whose holy flames, with energy divine,  
The virtuous heart enliven and improve,  
The *conjugal*, and the *maternal* love.

Sweet babes, who, like the little, playful fawns,  
Were wont to trip along those verdant lawns,

By your delighted mother's side,  
Who *now* your infant steps shall guide ?  
Ah ! where is now the hand, whose tender care  
To ev'ry virtue would have form'd your youth,  
And strew'd with flow'rs the thorny ways of truth,  
O loss beyond repair !

O wretched father left *alone*  
To weep their dire misfortune and thy own !  
How shall thy weaken'd mind, oppress'd with woe,  
And drooping o'er thy Lucy's Grave  
Perform the duties, that you *doubly* owe !

Now she alas ! is gone  
From folly and from vice, their helpless age to save ?

Mrs. Carter's celebrated "Ode to Wisdom" always makes one thrill with a melancholy pleasure, and it had furnished Louisa with these beautiful stanzas :

Thy breath inspires the poet's song,  
The patriot's free, unbiass'd tongue,  
The hero's gen'rous strife ;  
Thine are retirement's silent joys.

And

And all the sweet, endearing ties  
Of still, domestick life.

No more to fabled names confin'd,  
To thee, supreme, all-perfect mind,  
My thoughts direct their flight:  
Wisdom's thy gift, and all her force  
From thee deriv'd, unchanging source  
Of intellectual light.

O send her sure, her steady ray  
To regulate my doubtful way  
Through life's perplexing road;  
The mists of error to controul,  
And, through its gloom, direct my soul  
To happiness and good.

Beneath her clear, discerning eye  
The visionary shadows fly  
Of folly's painted show;  
She sees through ev'ry fair disguise,  
That all, but virtue's solid joys,  
Is vanity and woe.

Miss Seward's Poetical address to Mr.  
Wright, engaged in taking her father's  
picture, had supplied her with these  
four most interesting and pathetick  
lines;

O When

O When his \* urn shall drink my falling tears,  
 Thy † faithful tints shall shed a soft relief,  
 Glow with mild lustre, o'er my darken'd years,  
 And gild the gathering shades of filial grief.

The ever graceful and elegant Fontaine, so justly esteemed the Correggio of poetry, had supplied her with the fables of *Le Chene et le Roseau*, *La Fille*; and from the theatre *Sur l' Education* of the Comtesse le Genlis, she had stolen the fragrant rose of Salency.

From a judicious arrangement of these separate sweets, she had composed a very elegant *bouquet*, which cast a delicious *fragrance* on her character and virtues.

And now, tell me, what think you of Louisa? If she was married to the first sovereign of Europe, would she not be the richest jewel in his crown?

\* Her Father's.

† Wright's.



## LETTER XIV.

I WILL now give you another picture. It is that of a young lady, whom I have lately had the honour of seeing, just arrived from a *boarding school*. It is Lady Harriett ———. But I will not undertake to say, that the features will please you. They are certainly different from those of Louisa.

She was almost incessantly practising little arts, and adjusting all her airs and graces to engage admiration. When she spoke, she minced her syllables, and when she *looked*, she threw an *unnatural* vivacity into her eyes. She is a fine, blooming girl; and, if she had not taken such uncommon *pains* to please, must necessarily have charmed every beholder.

How long will it be before people learn, that nothing engages so much, as  
the

the ease of nature? An artless *simplicity* is the highest charm. Whatever *studies* admiration, raises disgust. System and constraint destroy *ease*. And ease is the parent of all the graces.

It is the business of education to lop off some little, *luxuriant* boughs from the tree of nature, but not to *constrain* it, that it cannot vegetate, or give to every branch, an *unnatural* direction. I should prefer the plain, honest awkwardness of a mere, country girl to over-acted refinement.

Though Lady Harriett — — — is not yet fourteen years old, she has more than the airs and forwardness of a woman. Who can have taught this girl, that roses are expected to open *all at once*, and not by degrees?

Timidity and diffidence are the most attracting qualities of a girl; a countenance always modest, and undefigning; a tongue, often silent, and ears, always attentive.

Boarding

Boarding schools, it should seem, may be compared to *hot-beds*. They bring fruits and flowers quickly to their growth. But they have not their proper essence, healthiness or flavour.

The *girlish* state is so pleasing, in itself, that we wish not to see it exchanged, before its time, for the caution, the artifices, or the subtil policy of age.

It is desirable, that a girl should retain, as long as possible, the innocent dress, manners, habit and sentiments of childhood. She will never be more captivating, when she is a woman. Natural, *untortured* ringlets, *fashe*s, frocks, &c. are superior to all the laboured trappings of fashion. Nature has given to every age, as well as to every *season* of the year, its *appropriate* charms. We should be greatly disappointed, if the soft breezes and the pleasing, new-born scenery of spring were impatient to dissolve into the sultry heats of summer.

*A forward*

A *forward* girl always alarms me. Indelicacy, imprudence and improper connections start up to my view. I tremble for her friends, and see her history, *gradually*, unfolding into indiscretion.

Children are apt enough, of *themselves*, to aspire into womanhood. A governess should *check* this spirit, and nip it in the bud. A long nonage, if I may so call it, is favourable to your sex. During *this* period, a girl is acquiring some *solid* improvement. When she fancies herself a woman, company, pleasures and conversation with the other sex, *unbinge* her mind, and bid unquiet thoughts take possession of her fancy.

I could discover from the conversation of Lady Harriett, that she was deeply read in novels and romances. Her expressions were beyond nature, turgid and overstrained, where she only wished to convey a *common* idea.



A *volume* would not be sufficient to expose the dangers of these books. They lead young people into an *enchanted* country, and open to their view an *imaginary* world, full of inviolable friendships, attachments, ecstasies, accomplishments, prodigies, and such visionary joys, as never will be realized in the *coarseness* of common life. The romantick turn, they create, indisposes for every thing that is *rational* or substantial. They corrupt all *principle*. Fortitude they unnerve, and substitute in its place, a *sickly* sensibility, that cannot relish *common* blessings or *common* things; that is continually wounded with its own fancies, and even "ready to expire of a rose, in *aromatick* pain." Their *sentiment* is but a fine spun word for *indelicate* emotions. Their *sympathy* and *friendship* are often but a specious, flimsy covering for *criminal* attachments. Such false, over-strained ideas have led many a poor girl to ruin. Under the notion of *superior*

*rior refinement, similarity of souls, and involuntary friendship, she has gradually been seduced from the paths of virtue, to the commission of the grossest crimes. A fine, splendid idea has been used to palliate the dreadful action. Sentiment has triumphed over the vulgar shackles of conscience, and of every social and moral obligation.*

Plays, operas, masquerades, and all the other fashionable pleasures have not half so much danger to young people, as the reading of these books. With *them*, the most delicate girl can entertain herself, in *private*, without any censure; and the poison operates more forcibly, because unperceived. The most profligate villain, that was bent on the infernal purpose of seducing a woman, could not with a symptom, more favourable to his purpose, than an imagination, inflamed with the rhapsodies of novels.

Lady H— betrayed great *pride*, in disavowing any acquaintance with some  
young

young ladies, at the same school, because their parents were not equal to her's in point of fortune. She had formed, poor girl! wrong notions of importance; and they had not, it should seem, been properly corrected.

Under the idea of teaching young people, what is due to their rank, boarding schools encourage pride *by a system*. Whoever consults the *happiness* of a daughter, should, as *systematically*, endeavour to propagate humility.

Alas! my dear girl, what have any of us to boast of? What dignity is there in an heap of money, unless it be devoted to charitable actions? To be carried in state, to eat *deliciously*, or to sleep on *down*, may have something in it, to *weak mortals*, that elevates and charms; but to an inhabitant of heaven, or to superior spirits, must be as frivolous, as the toils or little play things of children appear to *us*.

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E

What

What supreme importance does it give to a *rational* creature, that the silk worm has spun for her a robe of elegance, or that the milliner has bespangled her with ornaments? These ornaments alas! cover only a "poor worm," a sinner! a creature, subject to innumerable infirmities and sorrows! and after all, the peacock has more gaudy plumage, and flowers of the field are more beautifully decked!

Where again is the dignity of high birth, unless it leads to *dignified* conduct? And what are all these distinctions to a creature, that, *any instant*, may be stripped of every thing; that may die any hour; and must be called to a very severe account, if they have not been religiously improved?

If you are ever disposed to be proud, look forward to the moment, which will bury, along with you, in the *dust*, titles, honours, riches, beauty, friends, connections — to the moment, when the world



world will be shrivelled into atoms—when you must stand, a naked and unprotected criminal, before the supreme Majesty of heaven; and endeavour to acquire that universal love, which, for the sake of doing a religious action, is content to “become the servant of all.” This love will be a sovereign balsam to the soul. It will heal a thousand disorders, and *prevent* as many more.

The Author of all wisdom and greatness was “meek and lowly in heart.” He, who could have *commanded* kingdoms, inhabited a cottage. Humility is the *distinguishing* badge of his religion. And, whenever you are his *real* disciple, you will not exalt yourself above the meanest creature, but under an accumulation of all worldly distinctions, will smite upon your breast with the publican, and say, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

*Happiness* and *pride* are absolutely incompatible. Continual vexations, *fan-*

*ciful* slights and injuries and provocations wound the *self-sufficient* mind.

Pride is contrary to every thing, that *pleases* in a woman. It has no softness, no benignity, no ease. The apostle has *justly* called "a meek and quiet spirit, an *ornament*." It is the robe, in which a woman should always be dressed, who wishes to secure a permanent esteem.

#### LETTER XV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

**I** GAVE you a description of the *true* delicacy of Louisa. I have lately seen it over-acted by *another* person, in such a manner, as to disgust me beyond expression. The virtues and graces have all their limits. If pushed further, they degenerate into the very opposite defects. The lady, who hurt my feelings, had not *considered* this maxim. Or she had not  
taste

taste and sense enough to apply it. *Her delicacy was absolute prudery and affectation.*

True delicacy is nothing more, than the refinement of *modesty*. It is the sensitive plant of woman, which gives the quickest notice of approaching danger, and trembles at the bare *apprehension* of any thing, which can injure her honour, her safety, or repose. So amiable in itself, one cannot wonder, that every female wishes to be thought in possession of it. But it is a shy and timid plant, and least displays itself, where it is known to exist in the highest cultivation.

Some women are so *over-loaden* with this virtue, as to be almost insufferable in society; so *outrageously* virtuous, that they render all their purity and principles suspected.

This *tremblingly* modest female, in a company, of which I had lately the honour of making one, on hearing that a number of gentlemen were coming to

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drink

drink tea, seemed very much alarmed, and pretended to make an apology for retiring. Now this was nothing less than downright *hypocrisy*. If it had been possible to look into her heart, probably, at the very moment, it was thrilling with joy, for the agreeable information.

Every woman in the world is fond of our society, unless she has formed some *particular* attachment, and wishes to indulge the greater luxury of solitary recollection. It is a *natural* and an innocent pleasure, and it would be the *falsest* delicacy to disown it. We always *suspect* these prudes. We fancy, that their modesty diminishes in private, in proportion, as it appears to dilate and to magnify itself, before the public inspection.

Upon hearing, again, that a young lady had been smart and lively with a gentleman of her acquaintance, she *blessed her stars*, and wondered, how such forwardness escaped *reprobation*! Now this



this girl acted from *nature*. The gentleman was agreeable. She felt the pleasure. She dared to express it. She wished to entertain him, and she did right. The other blamed her from envy or from affectation.

These *over-nice* and *over-virtuous* people would do well to consider, that an odious restraint would banish all the sweets of an intercourse betwixt the sexes, and fix a moping and a dismal gloom on the face of the creation. It is no breach of true delicacy to comply with the innocent dictates of *nature*. A woman may, very modestly, avow a virtuous attachment. She may express an approbation of particular men, and do justice to their merit. She may shew a fondness for being in their company. She may chat, in a sociable and an easy manner with them; nay, she may think of being a *wife* or a *mother*, without injuring the finest tints of this laudable quality.

Providence intended her for such circumstances and connections, and they need not a *blush*.

That *piety* is most solid, which affects no gloomy rigours, or singularities; which makes no noise, and courts no observation. It is so with delicacy. *That* is *always* the most exquisite, which is least *ostentatious*. An *unstudied* openness and simplicity of manners are the strongest symptoms of a guiltless heart, and a virtuous intention. Those young people are, generally, the most amiable, that are most undisguised. Having nothing to *conceal*, they have studied no *art*. They may, *sometimes*, give way to little fallies, which the *rigid* would condemn; but they are fallies of good *humour*, and generosity forgives them.

Another instance, in which this Lady offended me, and yet from an *over* desire of pleasing, was by assuming a mistaken dignity. In fact, true dignity, in any person, consists in the *virtues*; humility, conde-

condescension, candour; and is only supported by *great* qualities, or by a train of amiable actions. But in a *woman's* manner, if she considered only what is *graceful*, there should always be more of the lovely, than the great; of the engaging, than the magnificent or sublime. Her *authority* should be lost in *sweetness*; the dazzling, in the mild.

Women were not formed to *awe* us by their majesty, but to *sooth* us by their graces. We may be struck with a Cleopatra, but we *love* an Antiope. A Catharine may *astonish* us, but we are *charmed* with a — C — e.

## LETTER XVI.

THE tour of affectation is unbounded.

I have just returned from a circle of ladies, who have been entertaining me with a very long harangue, on (what they choose to call,) *fine feelings*. This

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is

is quite a fashionable subject. The truth is, sensibility is considered, as a matter of refinement, and a proof of being raised above the vulgar; and many young people, I do believe, would be more hurt by any reflection on their sensibility, than if you suspected their piety and virtue.

This *rage* for the compliment of fine feelings seems to have originated in the writings of Sterne. His very eccentric talents were always contriving some fictitious tale of woe, and bidding the tear to drop; the general circulation of *his* works, and the novels, which have, since, sprung up in the *hot-bed* of France, and of our own *imagination*s, have led young people to fancy every grace and almost every virtue, comprized under this specious and comprehensive name.

Nothing certainly can be more nauseous and disgusting, than an *affected* sensibility, as nothing is more charming, than the pure and genuine. But, with  
all



all this *noise* about it, I am far from knowing, whether there is much of the real in the world. They, who would be thought to have it in perfection, are only in possession of the *artificial*. For is it sensibility to prefer the turbid pleasures of *midnight* to opening buds and blossoms; to the lessons, which the Creator gives in every vegetable and every insect; to undisturbed contemplation; to the raptures of devotion, or all the fair and enchanting landscapes of creation; to the sentiment, the taste and knowledge, that are displayed in the works of the most learned and ingenious men, or the entertainment and delight and profit, we might receive from the volume of revelation? Is it sensibility to form a sacred connection with one person, and encourage a criminal attachment to another? Is it sensibility to leave the charms, the cries, the wants and tender pleadings of an infant offspring, for the

vain and perishable splendour of a ball, a birth-night, or a levee?

Every *thinking* person must be disgusted with *such* a kind of sensibility. Rigid criticism would call it by a very *harsh* name, and society has reason to reprobate its tendency. Yet Sterne's sensibility led to many of these evils; and who knows not, that a thousand ladies, who *vaunt fine* feelings, are dupes to this ridiculous illusion?

*True feeling* is of a very different complexion. Like genius, it must come from *heaven*; indeed it is a part of genius; and, like that, is very rare. It depends, considerably on temperament and organization; is much heightened by particular advantages of education, society, friends, reading, observation and reflection; and will generally be quickest in the most elevated minds. But, even when it is most genuine and poignant, it will never be a guide, safely to be trusted, till it is governed by reason, checked

checked by discretion, and moulded by that religion, which requires us to devote every *instinct* we have, to the glory of God, and to the happiness of all our fellow-creatures, and of ourselves.

Thus *consecrated*, it is a source of the purest and the richest blessings. It is the parent of an earnest devotion to him, who gave it, and of a thousand blessings to mankind. It *appropriates* all the sorrows of its brethren; it feels in every woe, "rejoices with them, that do rejoice, and weeps with them, that weep?" and doubly alive to all the exercises of piety in blossoms, in flowers, in minerals, in vegetables, in stars, in planets, in the azure vault of heaven, in thunders, in storms, in earthquakes, in volcanos, in the revolutions of empire, and destruction of cities, feels most exquisitely, adores and loves and venerates the wisdom, the power, the goodness and wonders of an all-present, and all-disposing God.

It

It is with this, as with every other grace and virtue. There is a false and a true. The false is loud and noisy, much addicted to *egotism*, and obtrudes itself on publick observation in order to gratify its own conceit and vanity; the other, modest, timid, retired, *shrinks* into itself; feels, but says nothing of its feelings; suffers, but conceals its sufferings; rejoices, but does not vaunt its joy, and is too *delicate* in its nature, and too much *interested* to solicit pity, or to court approbation. The one is an humble fire work, which cracks and sparkles; the other is that lightning, which, in an *instant*, electrifies and shocks; this is the offspring of heaven; that, the artificial creature of the world.

I will conclude this letter with a contrast taken from life. Flavia lies in bed till noon; as soon as she rises, she opens a novel, or a play book; weeps profusely at *imaginary* distress, sips strong tea, till she is almost in hystericks; concludes, that sensibility  
is.



is all her own, and is perpetually complaining how her feelings are shocked with such a room, or such a prospect, the coarseness of *this* character, and of *that* conversation, and how the sight of a poor beggar gives her the *vapours*.

Emily never says a word about her feelings, rises with the dawn, endeavours to fortify her body with air and exercise, and her mind with devotion; is oftener seen with her *bible*, than any other book; seems pleased with every person and every object about her, and puts on a cheerful smile, when her bosom is *really* throbbing with pain for the distresses of her fellow-creatures.

I was lately in her company, when a case of very singular distress happened to be related, of a lady reduced from the height of affluence to a poverty, which she attempted to conceal. . . She uttered not a syllable, but, in a little while, quitted the room, and returned, after a considerable interval, with eyes, that she

she had *vainly* bidden not to betray her emotions. The next circumstance I heard, was, that she had sent a £.50 bank note, without any signature, to the relief of the fair sufferer. The secret was discovered, contrary to the strictest injunctions, by the *imprudence* of the bearer. She has, since, adopted one of the daughters to be educated for her own.

Tell me now, my Lucy, which of these is the true and the *productive* sensibility?

## LETTER XVII.

I WILL give you candidly, at your request, my opinion of some celebrated writers. If you differ from me on reading them, it may produce a collision of sentiments, which will be favourable to our mutual improvement.

At

At any rate, it will serve to exercise your own judgment and discrimination.

Voltaire is a graceful, but a *superficial* writer. He had more taste than genius, and more liveliness than authenticity. Volatile in his researches, impatient of investigation and hasty in his decisions, you can scarcely rely on the truth or authority of any facts he relates.

If I must recommend *any* of his works, it should be his *Henriade*. But I do not wish you to cultivate any close acquaintance with so erroneous and seductive an author.

Rousseau is very fanciful, but very engaging. His whims are all the ebullitions of genius; and, as such, they please. Nothing was ever so strangely romantick, as his *Emilius*, or *System of Education*; a mere, *paper* edifice of children, which the first and gentlest touch of experience totally destroys. You may read it to be amused, not to be instructed.

Why,

Why, you will naturally ask, were these distinguished men enemies to revelation? The truth is, genius disdains to move in shackles, or to tread *beaten* paths. Originality is its constant aim. It must, candidly, be owned, that revelation has some doctrines *superior* to our reason. Otherwise, we should have no exercise for our faith; and our organs of perception would be too subtil and too refined for a mortal state. And these very *enlightened* men choose not to stop at *mysteries*, but, in the pride of understanding, arrogantly disbelieve, what they cannot *comprehend*.

Happy the humble christian, who submits and adores! who considers reason, but as an *imperfect* guide, and patiently waits the moment, when the splendours of full discovery shall shine around him!



## LETTER XVIII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

AFTER all the noise, that has been made about him, what has this great Lord Chesterfield written? What *new* ideas has he communicated to the world?

He has given us a few sketches of heathen mythology, of the Grecian, Roman and English, histories, written in a pleasing style; and he has inculcated upon youth, that excellent maxim, of not losing a single moment from improvement. A man of very *moderate* talents might have done likewise. He had, doubtless, some claim to taste; but very little strength or originality of genius appears through his writings. But he was a *nobleman*, who had been conspicuous for his station, and his coronet has reflected a lustre on his page.

What

What real critick must not smile at his decision, when he boldly pronounces the "*Henriade*," of Voltaire, superior to the "*Iliad*" the "*Æneid*," and to "*Paradise Lost*?" Perhaps, this poem may be free from some, little *spots* of the others; but then it is not a sun, whose fire consumes every slighter blemish, and leaves the reader wrapped in a profound enthusiasm and amazement.

If it surpasses them in a cold correctness, has it their sublimity, their energy and fire? If it has not their excrescences, has it their impassioned beauties? Compared with the "*Iliad*," or with the work of Milton, it is a neat spruce fir, placed near a spreading and majestick oak. It is a gentle rivulet, by the side of a foaming torrent, or a magnificent ocean. It is a petty, artificial fire work, playing in the neighbourhood of a tremendous *Ætna*.

But Voltaire was a *congenial* writer, and a *congenial* soul. In praising his  
*superficial*

*superficial* talents, Chesterfield did an honour to his own.

If this writer had not been a peer, who would have read his letters with so much avidity? All he has produced, would, immediately, have perished with the other *frothy* bubbles of the day. His eternal repetition of "graces, graces," makes one absolutely sick; and the regimen he prescribes for the attainment of them, creates him an enemy in every friend of religion and of virtue.

Society should *burn* his books. All the women in the world, should form an *unanimous* confederacy against him. He has done every thing in his power to render *them* detestable; *they* should do every thing in *theirs*, to make the infamy of his character, immortal.

Read him, to despise his opinions and maxims. Read him, that you may *rescue* the honours of your sex, and give the lie, in your own example, to every *libel* he has uttered, and every scandal he has

has endeavoured to propagate through the world.

## LETTER XIX.

GIBBON is splendid, elaborate, elegant. To me, however, he is not, always, *perspicuous*. I am sometimes obliged to pause to discover his meaning. This arises from his having studied an uniform condensed harmony of period, or attempting to graft the peculiarities of *Facitus* on the English idiom. He is, however, on the whole, a captivating writer; and I would not forbid you the pleasure of perusing his interesting work. You may admire his language, without imbibing his infidelity. It is, indeed, so artfully concealed under beds of roses, that, if you had not heard so much about it, you would not easily have discovered the venom of his pen.

What



What could induce this splendid historian so insidiously to attempt the undermining of christianity, which is the greatest balm and sweetener of life? What are his rounded periods, if they have a tendency to rob the world of its sublimest prospects, and of all its supporting hopes? What will the fame of *talents* avail him, if he has done his utmost to circulate infidelity, as widely as his writings, and strew his paths, in every place, through which he has passed, with heaps of the murdered?

It is amazing that authors do not, more frequently, look forward to the moment, when to have made a noise in the world, by *singular* opinions, will convey no joy or comfort to the heart; and when the only consolation must be, that they have laboured to promote the glory of God, and the benefit of man.

I would not, for the richest mitre in the kingdom, be a Gibbon, in my latest moments. In health and prosperity, we  
may

may be dazzled with tinsel. But when we come to die, every thing will vanish, but piety and truth.

Immoral writers may do the greatest mischief to society, of any other characters whatever. They may corrupt and taint the morals of the most distant posterity. In this sense, they may, for a long time, *continue* to be sinning, when their bodies are entombed. Their sentiments may convey a deadly poison, to operate on many generations yet unborn. And what reparation or atonement can they make for unhinged principle, for violated integrity, and undermined hope. The Romish Church has a very striking doctrine, that such people continue in purgatory, the longest of all others.

I bless God, that I never wrote a line, however feeble, but with a good intention. And may this pen drop from my hands, before it ever leads me to finish a period, that shall give me one uncomfortable

uncomfortable thought, or one feeling of remorse, in my expiring moments.

## LETTER XX.

MY DEAR LUCY,

THOUGH, from principle, a disclaimer against novels, yet of *one* writer, who goes under this name, I profess myself a passionate admirer. I mean Richardson. His works, indeed, are not to be examined by the strict laws of a fastidious criticism. They have many *luxuriances*, and too much *proximity*. The language is natural and easy, but it is not *condensed* into the elegant conciseness and *energy* of the ancients. Richardson was a stranger to the inimitable models of Greece and Rome. He was not a *classick*; but he possessed a most extensive knowledge of human life and manners; his judgment

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was

was strong and penetrating; his taste, accurate; his sensibility, exquisite; his imagination, wonderful, and his heart, impassioned. Master of the human character, he knew all its *meandrings*. Master of the human soul, he penetrated into all its foldings and recesses.

With the same breath, and in the same moment, he melts, he transports, he elevates, he dignifies, he convinces, and instructs. Pathos is all his own. "He opens the hardest rocks by the mere force of his narrative, and the waters flow."

Richardson was, indeed, a writer of no trifling magnitude. He was a genius of no ordinary kind. Degrade this *ethereal* spirit, as you will, it will mount up to its kindred skies. Call him a *novellist*, his merit rises above names and forms. *These* cannot debase his talents. Handle this substance, as roughly as you please, it returns, with an elastick vigour, to its usual shape, and defies opposition.

But



But the excellency of his *intention* is above all praise. The interests of virtue and religion were near his heart; and he chose the epistolary plan merely to engage the attention of his readers, and that imagination might lend its liveliest charms to *animate* his precepts.

What a pattern of all virtues and graces, is his Grandison! What a lovely and finished girl, is his Harriett Byron! What an unruffled piety! What a melting affection! What filial duty to her aged grandmother! What a kind sympathy with all her friends! What sensibility, yet what prudence! What tenderness, yet what discretion appear in her character! How nicely is her seriousness mixed with vivacity, her fine sense with modesty, and her frankness, with decorum! How fondly does she love, yet how delicately does she manage, and regulate the flame!

When she pined, in secret, with an unconquerable attachment, what cheerful-

ness to all her friends burst through the heavy gloom, that loured on her mind! What fear of giving any pain to others, though comfortless herself! What veneration did she express for the unhappy Clementina! What a generous concern for the innocent, girlish emotions of Emily! What an unaffected friendship for the lively Lady G——, and when she was really addressed by her Grandison, with what an open frankness, yet what a guarded delicacy and involuntary confusion, did she tell him that he had the full possession of her soul!

How venerable and engaging has this writer made the character of a clergyman, in the case of Dr. Bartlett! How judiciously has he mixed the pastor, with the friend, and combined the most rigid principles, with the softest and most attractive graces. What innocence, integrity, and what prudence and caution about interfering in *family* concerns, has he given, in another work, to Dr. Lewen!

What

What an *independent* spirit, likewise; what a leaning to the side of the unfortunate Clarissa, in opposition to all the greatest of her friends; what a glowing, universal benevolence; what a serene, and undissembled piety! And how strikingly has he contrasted *both* with the cunning hypocrisy and pedantick affectation of another person, who, likewise, wore, without really *deserving*, so sacred a garb!

In opposition to modern customs, which, under a *false* idea of greatness, would trample on sacred ceremonies, and bring the holy ordinances of religion, to their own *fire-sides*, in a manner, which divests them of all solemnity and decorum, what an invincible attachment does his Grandison display to all the *decencies* and duties of the church! What a reluctance does he express against having his marriage *desecrated* by a *private* celebration; and how does he oblige his timid and his blushing Harriett to vow at the *altar*, in the presence of God,

and in the face of day, her obedience, and her affection! In fact these outward *decencies* are the very fences of piety. Break them down, and the sacred enclosure will soon become "common and unclean."

If, in short, I wished a girl to be every thing, that was *great*, I would have her continually study his *Clarissa*. If I was ambitious to make her every thing, that was *lovely*, she should spend *her days and nights*, in contemplating his *Byron*.

I must, however, confess a strong preference for the work of Sir Charles Grandison. The reading of *Clarissa*, leaves, upon the mind, too melancholy impressions. Her distresses are too deep and too *unvaried* for sensibility to bear. She was every thing, that was virtuous, and we look *up* with admiration. She was every thing, that was miserable, and we look *down* with despair. We are tempted to fancy, that "there is no  
"reward



“reward for the righteous, nor any God  
“that judgeth the earth.”

There is a certain point, *beyond* which our passions will not bear to be racked. Beyond it even sympathy, the loveliest of them all, turns into the wildness of despair. Virtue may have its sorrows and its trials; but they should not be *perpetual*. Hope would cease to bloom, and the year become intolerable, if it was wholly composed of a dull and dreary winter, without a spring. If Providence did not, generally, interfere in favour of its saints, religion, I should suspect, would soon lose one of its strongest encouragements, and most sovereign supports.

Miss Byron is always lovely, and always enchanting. Her virtues are more within the reach of mortality. Her afflictions are less poignant; and when her long attachment is crowned with success, every good mind feels a pleasure, too big for expression. We are happy for

Clarissa, only when she is *dead*. We are very agreeably interested for Miss Byron, through every period of her life, and *Lady Grandison* charms us into congratulating triumph.

## L E T T E R    X X I.

**Y**ou say very truly, that the pictures of Richardson are drawn above life; that Sir Charles Grandison never existed, except in idea, nor so accomplished a woman, as Harriett Byron.

All this is granted. Mortality does not admit of perfection. Light and shade go together. Foibles and perfections are an *inseparable* mixture. The rich soil, which produces great talents, by the same prolifick energy, nurses the rankest weeds.

But what is all this against his writings? Why people, you say, are deterred

terred from attempting to imitate so exalted a pattern. But that would be a mark of an ignoble soul, and of a lukewarmness in the cause of religion and virtue. If we despair of attaining to all their *perfections*, is it nothing to *approximate*, as nearly as we can? Is it not a noble and a glorious emulation, at least, to exert our *utmost* strength, when we are running the race of immortality?

The founder of our holy religion is much more highly raised above our imitation, and yet do not the scriptures press us to make the necessary attempt? Who ever thought this pattern blameable, because so *exalted*? Or who ever dreamed of remitting his endeavours, because he could not reach the *sublimity* of its virtues?

The one, you will say, was real; the other is fictitious; this is human; that was divine.

True; but are we not to copy this divinity, in our *degree*? And who can

blame fancy for presenting us with a *perfect* mirror of goodness? If imagination can be used to an important purpose, this, I think, is the plan; if it can be *sanctified* to aid the interests of piety, this appears the mode of *sanctification*. It is only to be blamed, and it then becomes, in all these books, a most dangerous and unholy principle, when it exhibits scenes and images to inflame those passions, which should always be, religiously, suppressed.

Nor do I blush, on the whole, cautious as I should be, to have borne this humble testimony to the merit of the author of Sir Charles Grandison, to have offered my unavailing incense at his shrine. If I durst *preach* in some such manner, I could make more converts. The pulpit will never have its full influence and effect, till *argument* is mixed with strong appeals to the *heart*; and till, whilst the judgment is convinced, the imagination is permitted by lively, descriptive



scriptive and energetick sallies, to captivate the soul.

## LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I REJOICE to find you disgusted with Tristram Shandy. I never thought these writings fit for a lady.

Let me candidly ask our modern fair ones; Could they bear to hear such *conversations*, without blushing, or expressing their contempt? And should not, then, the eye be as chaste, as the ear? The first, indeed, can be gratified in private. But can that delicacy be very exquisite, which can regale, when *alone*, on sentiments and descriptions, from which, in *publick*, it affects to turn away with indignation and abhorrence?

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I have

I have always, in private, lamented, that Sterne was a clergyman. He might be a lively, humorous companion, but he had too much *levity* for this profession. It is true, he had talents, but what is *ungoverned* genius, but a violent flame, which burns, instead of warming, and dazzles, where it should enlighten and direct?

This writer has done inexpressible mischief. He has opened wide the flood-gates of indecency, and an overwhelming torrent has poured on the land. He has conveyed *indelicate* ideas into the minds of young people, under the specious vehicle of sentiment, and he has dignified *eventual* criminality with the false, insidious title of *involuntary* attachment. The corrupted and unblushing fair has gloried in her shame. She has appealed for her justification, from the *grossness* of passion, to secret and *irresistible* feelings of the heart.

It

It is a just compliment to the present age, that the best writers preserve more decorum. An *indelicate* allusion would, now, be esteemed an unpardonable offence against the publick taste. Even the *stage* is considerably reformed. It was far otherwise in (what was called,) our *Augustan* age. Almost every author of *that* period (Addison excepted,) breathes something of indelicacy. In many passages, Swift is intolerable; Pope indecent; and even Bolingbroke, with all his claims to birth, as well as eloquence, is not without some *gross* ideas, and some vulgar expressions.

But the great corrupter of them all, was Swift. The *reservoir* of filthiness; all the separate streams might claim him for their parent source. I have already given my sentiments of this author. It is not necessary to swell the invective, or add any thing to the charges, adduced against him. His abilities I never suspected;

pected; but I always called in question his temper and his heart.

Panegyrists, however, have enumerated his many virtues. To Ireland, they say, he was a skilful patriot; to the church, a defender, and to the poor, a friend.

For the honour of human nature, I will not endeavour to put a negative on these virtues. Let them all be taken into the *general* account. The balance will not still be heavy in his favour.

#### LETTER XXIII.

W HATEVER devotional writers increase your piety, by all means use them. I *did* not mention, in my catalogue, *Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises of the Heart*, with which you are so much pleased, because to *me* they appeared, *overstrained*, and rather rhapsodies of a fervid



fervid imagination, than the dictates of a cool and a dispassionate judgment. But if they really warm and edify, *that* is the great and ultimate end of all religious writings; and no one can pretend, in this respect, to prescribe to the conscience or the feelings of others.

From my observations, however, upon life and manners, that piety has always appeared the most *durable*, which is most founded on reason and conviction; and, though I abhor the cold rock of scepticism, yet there is, likewise, some danger, that a well-disposed woman, whose sensibility is, as yet, stronger than her judgment, may founder on the opposite quicksands of enthusiasm, or of superstition.

Still I would rather see a small mixture of *credulity*, than *unbelief*; but there is an happy medium betwixt the extremes; and it is very observable, that those people, who, in some peculiar period of their lives, or under some *distressing* circumstances,

cumstances, have seemed to soar, upon the wings of pious zeal, into the highest regions, have, afterwards, sunk below the common level, into a strange degree of carelessness and inattention.

There are moments in the moral life, when fancy plucks the reins out of the hands of reason; and though she drives, at intervals, with a furious rapidity, yet nature soon becomes exhausted with the *violence*, and cannot mount some intervening hills without stopping for refreshment. Sometimes, she has been known, to sit down in a listless languor, and wholly to abandon the journey in despair.

We are not, in this state, formed for *extremes*. Any of the passions, too *violently* exercised, would wear out an imperfect frame. True piety is not the blazing *meteor* of an hour, fiery in its aspect, and engaging the astonishment of a gazing multitude, but that softer and settled light of the firmament,  
“ which

“ which shineth more and more, unto the perfect day.”

## LETTER XXIV.

I AM sorry to say, that you display a *false* taste in admiring Kilkhampton Abbey. I am now speaking of its merits, merely as a *composition*. It is not executed with the skill of a master. The same, uniform turn of period and of sentiment, and the same laboured *pomp* of words, is visible through all the different inscriptions. Surely the epitaphs on so many characters, all written, as might be supposed, by *different* hands, should be various and multiform.

I never thought epitaph an easy species of writing. It requires such a nice discrimination of character, such a force of pathos, and so concise an elegance, as fall not to the lot of one man, in a thousand.

Many

Many have *attempted* this style of composition; but, in my opinion, few have succeeded.

I do, indeed, most cordially detest this *anonymous* abuse. It is contrary to all my ideas of civilization, politeness, fortitude, and even common generosity, and militates against every thing, that should constitute the real character of a gentleman, or a christian.

No man lives, without *faibles* or *particularities*; and, if instead of making allowance for those of others, in order to receive an indulgence for our own, we ungenerously expose them to ridicule or contempt, the consequence, in society, must be a general coldness, disgust, rancour, hostility, and *unceasing* persecution.

No person can be so circumspect, particularly, in a publick character, as to avoid creating, though without intending it, a number of little piques and enemies against himself; sometimes  
even



even by an inflexible discharge of *necessary* duties; and if his character must be taken from the colourings of those, whom he has thus innocently, perhaps *laudably*, offended, all his virtues will be thrown into the back ground, and his foibles aggravated with the utmost virulence of malice and resentment. Prejudice *against*, may render the most amiable person *ridiculous*, by concealing the *great*, and bringing forward the little; and prejudice *for*, may give some sort of merit to the most despicable and abandoned. Such a liberty of the press is downright *licentiousness*; and every friend to order and virtue, if he will consult his own feelings, will not hesitate to pronounce, that, of all *sacred* things, character is *most* so.

If a person, however great, had used me *ungenerously*, I would certainly expose him to publick censure, and drag him before the formidable tribunal of my country. I would appeal from the oppression

oppression of any *individual*, to the *general* equity and candour of mankind. *This*, I should conceive, not merely an act of justice to *myself*, but likewise to the world. It is a *common* interest, that *tyrants*, however high in rank, or in self-estimation, should meet with their deserved infamy and contempt. Such a display of *true* spirit wonderfully stops the progress of despotism, and teaches insolence, the hard lesson of moderation. But, then, it should be done in the most open manner. I would candidly subscribe my name to the charges I adduced; and, whilst I shewed the world that I feared not the person of man, I would convince mine adversary, that I was far above the meanness of taking an *unmanly* or ungenerous revenge.

This honest courage was possessed, in an eminent degree, by the late Dr. Johnson. Nothing has pleased me more, in the history of his life, than his truly magnanimous conduct to the late earl  
of

of Chesterfield. When he undertook to compose his *elaborate* dictionary, he solicited the favour of inscribing it to his Lordship, who was then, if I mistake not, secretary of state. Flattered with *appearing* the patron of literature, Chesterfield accepted the honour of the dedication, and an *honour* it would have been to any nobleman in the world. In the progress of this long and tedious work, he received no very solid marks of encouragement from his patron, and suspected, on the whole, that the courtly peer meant only to *amuse* him.

Johnson had too much spirit either to brook the idea of neglect, the chicanery of a minister, the violation of a promise, or the servility of an abject dependence. He was not likely to be dazzled with the glitter of a coronet, or intimidated with the ceremonious pageantry of office. He, therefore, wrote a formal letter to the nobleman, upbraiding him with insincerity, disclaiming his protection,

protection, and assuring him, that he did not want, and never would receive, any of his favours. The consequence of this *fracàs* was, that he afterwards stung Chesterfield with such bitter invectives, and so many pointed strokes of raillery and satire, as made him heartily repent of having roused his resentment, and desirous, at any rate, of a reconciliation. Johnson, however, persisted in his antipathy, and never afterwards, I believe, wrote a dedication.

If Chesterfield intended only to dally with the author of this dictionary, he should certainly have considered, that men of great abilities have too much penetration not to see through any flimsy disguises of a minister; too much irritability not to be exasperated with hypocrisy or artifice, and too *lofty* a reliance on their own *native* powers to be afraid of any peer or monarch in the world.

Johnson, it is true, had not then attained all his eminence and distinction.

He



He was, comparatively, but *rising* into notice. The day, that should announce him the *hero* of literature, was only in its dawn. But contrasted with his *solid* merit, what is the paltry tinsel of station, from which some people immediately become so supercilious and forbidding?

If Chesterfield did not think the author of the Rambler, greater than himself; if, from the foot alone, he could not prognosticate the future strength and immense proportions of this literary *Hercules*, he had not a single grain of that shrewdness or discernment, for which he has been so much complimented by the world.

Such is *my* idea of the true and genuine spirit, which should characterize a scholar, and a gentleman. It is not a stiletto; stabbing in the dark, but a challenge to a fair and generous onset, in which your antagonist has the opportunity of self-defence, and of managing all his weapons to advantage.

LETTER

## LETTER XXV.

THE beauty of the lady, you allude to, was her misfortune. It inspired her with an immoderate vanity, and that vanity paved the way to her ruin. It dug the grave, in which her peace and character are now intombed.

And after all, my dear girl, what is this beauty? It is a little clay, cast in an elegant mould, and by the hand of an exquisite artist, fashioned into something of symmetry and order. It is a small mixture, in the cheek of roses and carnations.

But who needs to be informed, that clay is very perishable, that roses and carnations are but for *summer moments*, and that afterwards there comes a long autumn of sickness, or a still more dreary winter of infirmity and old age.

How

How transient are the power and duration of beauty! How very slight an accident or disease blasts it for ever! How fatal is a fever, the small-pox, or a little corroding grief, to all its allurements! and if they do not perish sooner, how dreadfully are they ravaged by the hand of time!

Whilst summer lasts, a few, fluttering insects light upon its lips, to sip the sweets. Some straggling birds of passage chirp upon the neighbouring spray, delighted with a view of the amiable object. The notice is enchanting, and imagination promises, that it shall be *eternal*. But the first storm that comes, alas! these feathered songsters migrate to warmer climates, and a serener sky, leaving all its withered charms to perish in neglect!

How ridiculous is the girl, who wilfully swallows the poison of flattery for any personal charms, and, in the height of her intoxication, can be insolent or

conceited ! What woman of spirit should not aspire to qualities, that are less *accidental* and less subject to change ! What woman of reflection should not resolve to adorn and cultivate a mind, whose treasures may be inexhaustible, and whose attractions never die ?

I pity every girl, whom nature has gifted with a very pretty face. She seems, by the very act, to have marked her out for trials and temptations, and our strength is not always in proportion to our conflicts.

Most of the unfortunate ladies I have known, have been celebrated for their beauty. This has gathered all the worthless of our sex about them ; and called them into battle, where, if they have not fallen, they have *generally* received considerable scars.

Beautiful women, flushed with conquest, often neglect the *necessary* cultivation of their heart and understanding ; and, if every man would examine himself seriously,



seriously, and was required to give in a list of the females he *most* respects, the prettiest, I believe, would not *generally*, be in the number.

## LETTER XXVI.

Do you ask for *patterns* of conduct after what I have said of Louisa? I do not think you want any; but I will mention a few, which just occur, and endeavour to appreciate their merits or defects.

Addison has several in his Spectators, which are wrought up with inimitable beauty,

The *Antiope* of Cambray, is a charming picture, but it betrays the touches of a popish ecclesiastick.

Law's *Miranda* is an *heroine* of virtue; but she breathes too much the austerity and the abstraction of that very animated, but peculiar, writer. Her piety is too

G 2                      monastick.

monastick. It wants grace, cheerfulness and ease.

Richardson's *Clarissa* has qualities *above* woman, and her sorrows plunge the reader into despair.

Miss *Byron* is every thing, that is finished in a female. We admire her greatly, but we love her more. The *sweetness* of the character swallows up its dignity; in the amiable, we forget the great. She is precisely what every man of principle and taste would have a woman *to be*, when he wishes to be married, and wishes to be happy.

With *some* persons, his *Clementina* may have her superior excellencies. A passion, all sentiment, and all directed to the *mind*, and a superstitious religion, in a particular country, wholly vanquishing that passion, may be a fine-spun, amusing speculation. But to *me* it appears visionary and *romantick*; and the admirers of this story will generally, I conceive, be found

found amongst those ladies, who would gladly persuade us, that by a *rant* of goodness, they can rise above the innocent passions of mortality, and all the *natural* weaknesses of their sex.

When I wish to be delighted and charmed with woman, I would always place before me the full-length piece of *Harriett Byron*. She has sentiment, but she has frailty; she has *spirit*, but she confesses herself to have, likewise, *matter* in her composition.

## LETTER XXVII.

POOR Louisa, notwithstanding all her goodness, is, at present, in the greatest affliction, and for a reason, which reflects no little honour on her sensibility and virtue.

I have just received a letter from her father, informing me, that Dr. ———,

Rector of B—, and the confidential friend and intimate of their family, is very probably, on his death bed. He was lately called upon, it seems, to visit one of his hearers, who was sick with a putrid, sore throat, and fever, and has taken the infection. The physicians entertain but slender hopes of his recovery, and Philander\* has been administering to him that holy sacrament, which, with prayers and blessings, he has himself, so often, administered to others. The whole village is in mourning. All the peasants, I am told, appear, as sheep, without a shepherd.

This good man was well acquainted with every person in his parish. He thought it his duty, to visit all his hearers, to investigate their *spiritual*, as well as temporal wants, and to remove the former, whilst he extended a liberal supply to the latter.

\* The father of Louisa.



The death of such a person is more than the loss of the nearest relatives. A good clergyman, in the country, unites, in his own person, all the tender connections. He is father, brother, guardian, all in one. Dr. ——— was not only revered, as a minister, but, in every family, welcomed, as a bosom friend.

A religious pastor, indeed, never fully knows the comforts of his office, till he is thus united to his people, "till he knows his sheep, and they follow him." In such an intimacy, hearts expand; many excellent and *seasonable* advices may be given, which the solemnity of the pulpit would not admit; little griefs are unbosomed; little perplexities are removed, and affection springs up by the side of duty.

I am going to make a visit to this worthy clergyman, and will give you

the earliest intelligence of the state, in which I find him.

## LETTER XXVIII.

THE apprehensions concerning Dr. ——— were but too well founded. He is, I do believe, in the last stages of his life. Death is on the point of closing his eyes, and opening for him the just reward of all his labours and his zeal.

I have been with him almost night and day, ever since I had the pleasure of writing to you, and have received a stronger lesson, than ever, of the vanity of all *earthly* things, and the supreme dignity of virtue.

These solemn scenes wonderfully improve the heart. They strip ambition of its plumage. The world appears a phantom!

phantom ! honours and promotions all a dream !

Though I have been much affected, yet I have been comforted, in an equal degree, by his cheerful piety, and edifying conversation. His faith and resignation rise superior to his pains. They are literally big with immortality; and he longs to be dissolved and to be with Christ.

Unwearied and exemplary as he has *always* been, in the discharge of his pastoral duties, he is continually lamenting his want of zeal, vigilance and exertion. The duties of the ministry are, I do believe, beyond human ability: "who, said St. Paul, is sufficient for these things?" But when I hear the declarations of this excellent man, and compare, as it is natural, his example with my own, I cannot but be seriously alarmed, and sketch out nothing for *my own* last moments, but remorse and fears.

My good friend and his lady have taken their last leave. It would have touched *any* heart to have seen this interview. I cannot do it justice by *words*. The pencil of a Raphael could not fully represent it. It was all *heart* and soul. Silent looks and *manner* were the principal language, and they spoke indeed! Such a woman's breast panting with grief, upon such an occasion, rises above the powers of description.

"O (says the expiring christian, raising his languid eyes and endeavouring to use a tongue, which death had almost palsied,) "be, as you *have* been, "the comforters of my people (for they "alas! will feel a *transient* void,) and "our friendship, I doubt not, will "shortly be renewed in another life. "Death can only, for a little time, separate these *bodies*; our real *interests*, "our *souls* and happiness must ever be "united."



Louisa is inconsolable. "Tears have  
"been her meat, day and night;" and  
her grief is the heavier, as she is not per-  
mitted, from motives of *prudence*, to see  
the last struggles of this excellent man,  
or receive his blessing.

"Providence, (says the accomplished  
"girl,) has, *now*, but *one* heavier stroke  
"to inflict, and that is the death of  
"my father, or my mother. Indeed  
"a *second* father he has always been to  
"me, in the fullest sense of the word.  
"What has not this good man done,  
"what has he not ever said to train  
"my youthful sentiments to virtue,  
"and direct my steps into the way of  
"peace? To *him* I could disclose  
"every rising fear. To him I could  
"unbosom the anxious sorrow, that  
"would have lurked at my heart.  
"But why should I complain? Have  
"I not still a *thousand* comforts, spread  
"round my retirement? Have I  
"not yet two parents left, accom-  
G 6 "plished,

"plished, as they are tender, and  
 "watchful, as they are good? It is  
 "improper to grieve. I will dry these  
 "tears. It is the Lord, let him do  
 "what seemeth him good. The good  
 "Abraham was required to sacrifice,  
 "on the altar, with his *own* hands,  
 "an only son. And I should surely  
 "learn to resign without murmuring,  
 "whenever it shall seem meet to his  
 "wisdom and goodness, the nearest  
 "friend."

## LETTER XXIX.

**T**HE conflict is finished. The pangs  
 are over. Dr. — is no more.  
 He is now, I trust, a blessed spirit, and  
 knows no longer pain, or sorrow, or ap-  
 prehension.

From the natural tendernefs and  
 sensibility of his temper you may won-  
 der,

der, that he lived and died, unmarried. But it is a secret, known only to his intimate friends, that he had formed an attachment, in his early years, which being disappointed by the death of the lady, the delicacy of his mind never *afterwards* admitted of another. His partiality was not of the common, fugitive kind. It was a deep and *permanent* impression. Having *once* fondly loved, he attempted to love no more.

As his private fortune was comfortable, and his preferment, good, you will conclude, perhaps, that he died very rich. But this is not the case. The poor were constantly fed from his table, as well as edified by his counsels. He was a living example of the charity, he recommended, and a witness of the truth, "that it is more blessed to give, than to receive."

Though remarkable for his prudence, as well as pastoral zeal, yet having but a few, distant relatives,  
who

who were all in very easy circumstances, he has only left to each, an equal legacy, of £100; and the remainder of the £5,000 he possessed, is entirely devoted to charitable uses.

To each of his three servants, he has bequeathed an annual stipend of £20, on this easy condition, however, that they be never absent, when in *health*, from the church or sacrament; that they always appear neat and decent, and that they lay up, from their pittance, one single six-pence, on the first day of every week, to be expended in *charity*. The residue of his fortune is to be employed, partly in establishing a fund for the distribution of religious books and tracts, amongst the poor and ignorant of his parish, at the discretion of the minister; and, partly, for the clothing and educating a specifick number of boys and girls in a school, which he had founded,



and very principally supported, in his life-time.

My friend and I are joint executors. To him he has bequeathed a considerable part of his excellent library; to me, a number of books, which are at once a monument of his taste and friendship; to Mrs. —, all the elegant furniture of his drawing-room, and to his sweet, and, as he styles her, ever dear Louisa, his pictures, statues, busts and petrefactions, beside a number of *devotional* authors, gilt and finished with an elegance and beauty, which express the opinion he had justly conceived of her cultivated mind.

When the poor girl was informed of this legacy, she burst into a flood of tears, nor could all the tender offices of her friends console her. “How insupportable, (said she,) is this man’s generosity! with what a cruel kindness does he haunt me after death! Had it not been for this, perhaps,

“ haps, I should more easily have  
“ learned the *hard* lesson of resignation.  
“ But this tenderness renews my grief,  
“ and tears open afresh the wounds,  
“ which I have been summoning all my  
“ fortitude to close. But why must I  
“ not see this good man on his death-  
“ bed, to testify, for the last time, the  
“ warmth of my gratitude, and the sin-  
“ cerity of my esteem?

“ But tell me, ye, who were ad-  
“ mitted to his presence, what said he  
“ of me, in his latest moments? Did  
“ he, then, at all recollect his Louisa?  
“ Did he even glance at so humble a  
“ name? Did he send me one pre-  
“ cious word of advice? Did he con-  
“ jure me never to forget his direc-  
“ tions? Did he bid me to be virtu-  
“ ous, did he bid me to be happy?  
“ Yes, blessed spirit, I will remember  
“ thy example: I will treasure up thy  
“ counsels. Thy instructions shall ne-  
“ ver

"ver fade. Thy memory shall be immortal."

And, now, what is your opinion of Louisa? What think you of *such* a clergyman? What are dignities, compared with such virtues? What are kingdoms, contrasted with such joys? Should not history embalm his relicks, and should not gratitude pour over his undying memory, an undying perfume?

## LETTER XXX.

I REJOICE to hear that you have so great a taste for paintings. You will find it an inexhaustible source of pleasure and improvement. For,

"Each pleasing art lends softness to our minds,

"And with our studies, are our lives refin'd."

I will give you a very handsome eulogy on this art, in the words of a great writer, Quintilian. "Picture, (says he,)

“he,) a silent and uniform address,  
“yet penetrates so deeply into our  
“inmost affections, that it seems often  
“to exceed even the powers of elo-  
“quence. Its effects, indeed, are some-  
“times amazing. It is said, that Alex-  
“ander trembled and grew pale, on  
“seeing a picture of Palamedes, be-  
“trayed to death by his friends; it  
“bringing to his mind a stinging re-  
“membrance of his treatment of Aris-  
“tonicus. Portia could bear, with an  
“unshaken constancy, her last separa-  
“tion from Brutus; but when she saw,  
“some hours after, a picture of the  
“parting of Hector and Andromache,  
“she burst into a flood of tears. Full as  
“seemed her sorrow, the painter sug-  
“gested new ideas of grief, or impressed  
“more strongly her *own*.”

Your question concerning the superi-  
ority of the ~~the~~ ancients or moderns in  
this particular, is very easily answered,  
In most, if not *all* the fine arts, indeed,  
the



the former, according to my apprehension, are absolutely unrivalled. By the ancients, I *now* mean, particularly, the Greeks.

Whether it was owing to the particular nature and freedom of their government—to the superior honours and encouragement that were lavished on genius and the arts in this more early period of society—whether to any particular superiority of organization in the natives of this country—whether to its beautiful scenery or the allegorical nature of a religion, which so much called painting, poetry and sculpture into exercise—or whether we may not ascribe it to an happy *combination* of all these separate causes, it is certain, that their taste and imagination were exquisite beyond those of any other people, and produced a degree of excellence in their artists, that we cannot find in any other age or country of the world.

Raphael,

Raphael, whom all Europe has so much praised, excelled only, as he formed himself upon the model of the *Greeks*. The Italians (observes an able judge,) may excel in colouring; but composition, drawing, the art of grouping, attitude, movement, expression, contrast, drapery, character and grace—all these, this great genius confessedly borrowed from the ancient statutes and bas-reliefs.

Palladio is the first of architects, Michael Angelo, Fiammingo, Algardi, the most celebrated sculptors, only for the same reason; they studied the *Greeks*. Yet Angelo was the boldest genius, that Italy ever had. “It was he, who conceived the idea of placing the pantheon in the air, and constructed the dome of St. Peter’s on the same dimensions.

Nor in *letters* were the *Greeks* less the model of perfection. To emulate their best writers has been the ambition of every

every succeeding age. And excellence has been attained only in proportion to the successfulness of this imitation.

The first and most complete *poem* in the world, is Grecian—the Iliad of Homer. It unites all the separate, astonishing excellencies of this most difficult species of composition; the majestic, the terrible, the pathetick and the sublime. Naturalists, philosophers, painters, poets, orators, metaphysicians, have all, in various methods, dug from this mine, and still left it full of inexhaustible treasures. It is proverbially known, how much the great Roman orator studied Homer, and indeed how much he has been praised by the whole world. I will give you a few testimonies in his favour.

The first critick, that ever existed, is Longinus, who wrote a Treatise on the Sublime: This is *his* opinion of the Iliad:

“ Those only, who have sublime and  
“ solid thoughts, can make elevated,  
“ discourses,

“discourses, and in this part, Homer  
 “chiefly excels, whose thoughts are all  
 “sublime, as may be seen in the descrip-  
 “tion of the goddess, Discord, who has,  
 “says he, her head in the skies, and  
 “her feet upon earth; for it may be  
 “said, that that grandeur which he gives  
 “her, is less the measure of Discord,  
 “than of the capacity and elevation of  
 “Homer’s genius.”

*Treatise on the Sublime.*

Again in another place: “To Homer,  
 “that is, to him, who had received the  
 “applauses of the whole world.”

And, in a third passage, mentioning  
 the number of men, who had endea-  
 voured to imitate Homer, he ob-  
 serves:

“Plato, however, is he, who has imi-  
 “tated him most, for he has drawn from  
 “this poet, as from a living spring, from  
 “which he has turned an infinite number  
 “of rivulets.”

Another excellent judge is Horace,  
 who bears to this prince of poets, this  
 honourable



honourable testimony, that he taught *philosophy* better than many, who were philosophers by *profession*.

A third critick of no inconsiderable talents has these lines in his favour:

On diroit que pour plaire instruit par la nature  
Homere ait à Venus derobé sa ceinture ;  
Son livre est d'agremens un fertile trésor,  
Tout ce qu'il a touché se convertit en or.

Pope's opinion of him it is not necessary to recite ; and the "Jerusalem Delivered," of a great author, is, from beginning to end, a *tacit* comment on, for it is an attempt to imitate, his greatness.

Let me not omit the compliment of Dante, for it is worth recording:

Quegli è Omero poeta sovrano  
Signor dell' altissimo canto  
Che sovra gli altri, come Aquila, vola :

The best writers of the Augustan age of Rome formed themselves considerably on *Grecian* models. The most perfect authors

authors in England, France and Italy; Addison, Pope, Racine, Boileau, Tasso and Metastasio took the same method to arrive at perfection; and one might challenge the whole world to produce any other poem, like the Iliad; an orator, equal to Demosthenes; such a finished tragedy as the *Œdipus* of Sophocles; any figure in marble, like the Belvedere Apollo; such fine and light drapery, as that of the Flora, or a female beauty, as perfect as the Venus of Medici.

The great Montesquieu was, for some time, in Italy, and, as you may suppose, no superficial observer. This was his decision concerning the Greeks. "Taste and the arts have been carried by them to such an height, that to think to surpass, will be always not to know them."

I have been thus diffuse on a subject, that may *appear*, but *is*, by no means, foreign to your improvement, or above  
your

your comprehension, merely that you might form just ideas in your favourite art; that you might know why we say so much of classick or ancient writers; and why every person should emulate their manner, who wishes, even by a single sentence, to please. I will close this letter with adding my *own* grateful tribute to the venerable shade of a Bard, that so much delighted my early years, and yet fills me with a pleasing enthusiasm, every time I peruse him. I will use the words of a French writer :

Reçois l'éloge pur, l'hommage merite;

Je le dois à ton nom, comme à la verité.

*Art de la Guerre.*

Receive this pure applause, this homage due

To thy great name, because I know 'tis true.

## LETTER XXXI.

THE Italians excel in some of the fine arts. In *musick*, perhaps, they may justly claim a decisive superiority. Of *colouring*, they are great masters. Amongst many other distinguished painters, they boast a Correggio. No one could do more honour to any nation. He is the very pupil of nature, and has wonderfully united elegance and ease. If Raphael shines in the *majestick*, he has all the *soft* and *amiable* graces.

In *landscape* painting, Italy is unrivalled. Those of Claude Lorrain are superior to any other master's. Perhaps one reason is, the beauty of the scenes, from which they are taken. Viewed collectively, there is not, I should conceive, a more delightful and enchanting country. It seems to mingle all the soft and milder beauties



beauties of climate, with the magnificent and tremendous; gentle hills, rich valleys, fruitful extensive vineyards, with craggy, rugged precipices, with the portentous aspect and caverns of *Ætna*; the bay of Naples, with the formidable grandeur and thunder of *Vesuvio*.

No place has been the scene of so many memorable events, or given birth to such a number of distinguished men. Tuscany produced *Dante*, *Petrarch*, and *Michael Angelo*; *Livy* was born at *Padua*; *Titian* at *Venice*, and *Ariosto* at *Ferrara*. *Urbino* is justly proud of *Raphael*, and *Parma* of *Correggio*. *Rome* claims *Tacitus* and *Lucretius*, *Arpinum*, *Cicero*, and *Venusium*, *Horace*.

If my leisure and opportunities had been equal to my wishes, I should have gloried in traversing this country. Every step would have had a peculiar interest, and every scene revived those glowing descriptions of a *Virgil* or an *Horace*,

H 2

that

that fascinated my *earliest* years. When a person has been, some time, in the world, whatever recalls the *first* days of life, administers the sweetest pleasure. It is the picture of innocence and tranquillity, whilst our maturer age is often a bustle or a storm.

In ancient Rome, it was a confessed maxim, that true politeness and taste were derived from the Grecians. And the Italian artists still owe much of their excellence to these primitive masters.

The *literary* taste of the Italians is very exceptionable. It is a false sublime, a fictitious glitter, and a barren abundance, and has lost the true Attick salt of nature, of truth and simplicity. Hence they are said to prefer the gothick works of Dante, the absurdities of Ariosto, the extravagances of Marini, and the tinsel puerilities of Tasso, to the tender and impassioned descriptions of Metastasio.

The

The *French* seem to think themselves exclusive proprietors of every thing, that goes under the denomination of taste. And, indeed, they are universally esteemed a polished, easy, graceful and seducing people. Few of their writers, however, have much of the *profound*, or that bids fair for *duration*. Of *all* people, they seem *least* to have studied the *classicks*. Their style, in general, wants energy and compactness. In *many* words, they communicate but *few* ideas, and their imagination is permitted to run *wild* without hearkening to the sober dictates of judgment. Though trees in blossom are a beautiful object, yet the solid *advantage* lies in their *fruit*. I could except many great names from this, *apparently*, invidious censure. One, particularly, I will mention—that is Montequieu. This man will do them honour with all other nations, and the most distant posterity. His *Esprit de Loix* is, indeed, a most astonishing performance.

It unites the depth, the phlegm and patience of some other countries, with the vivacity of that, in which it sprung.

I do not think that England is, by any means, either from climate, or other fostering circumstances, the *natural* soil of the *fine arts*. The hot-bed of riches, it is true, has raised a few *exoticks*, in *this* way, to a superior *flavour*; and publick encouragement called forth many virtuosos from other countries. But, in fact, we are too much engaged with trade and politicks to cultivate, in any extraordinary degree, the *finer* emotions. Commercial habits, manufactures, and the love of money, wherever they prevail, will always be the grave of *virtù* and of taste. In point of *polite* learning this kingdom has, long since, according to my apprehension, been at its zenith. The sun of its Augustan age appears to be set. But for *profound* knowledge and genius, no nation, perhaps, in the known world, *has*



has been more distinguished. Shakespear, Milton, Locke, Sir Isaac Newton! what other country can produce such a group? Nor shall we want models of the most graceful in *writing*, whilst we can read the works of Addison, many papers in the World, the Letters of Lady Wortley Montague, or those of Chesterfield.

I do not mean to deny, but that *general science* is more cultivated amongst the moderns, than it ever was by the ancients, and, in the *present* age, more than at any former period whatever. Natural philosophy in all its branches, chemistry, mathematicks, history, politics, jurisprudence, and the mechanical arts have arrived to a wonderful degree of perfection, and are daily receiving fresh accessions of improvement. But I must still assert, that polite learning seems to have flourished most in the days of Swift, Pope and Addison. What can be the reason? Is it that being *then* more new, as having but just emerged

H 4

from.

from the darkness of the times, it was treated with that superior respect and deference, we extend to a stranger? Is there a greater *dearth* of real genius? *That* we cannot suppose, if we give ourselves only leisure to consider the many exalted characters, which Britain boasts. The case, I think, is clear, that a most extended commerce has debased our feelings and vitiated our taste; that the grand, *political* interests of the nation, as it is *now* circumstanced, require a most unremitting attention; that the high road to honours and emoluments chiefly lying through the bar or senate the greatest talents in the kingdom are turned into these channels. Men rather chuse to wrangle and *debate* themselves into affluence and titles, than starve on the mere, *shadowy* fame of an elegant production.

Wherever there is hope of patronage, genius springs of course; and though his present MAJESTY has always been a liberal encourager of polite knowledge, yet nothing can effectually counteract the wide,  
and

and most unlimited agency of this *national* situation.

Many writers, in our *Augustan* age, arrived by their labours merely, not only to considerable affluence, but to high distinctions. They were caressed and honoured in the most fashionable circles. To reward and patronize talents, was a glory and a pride. It is very observable, that all the great, *literary* characters of the *present* times, who were born nearest to the period, which I have described, retain most of this liberal, *patronizing* spirit. I could, with great truth and *feeling*, mention some names, if *situation* and peculiar circumstances would not expose me to the *false* suspicion of intending to pronounce fulsome panegyrics. But will not the whole world acquit me of partiality, if I glance at such illustrious names as the A—b—p of Y—k, the present Lord C—l—r, or the Earl of M—sf—d?

## LETTER XXXII.

**Y**OUR knowledge of the Italian language is much superior to my own. The little that I *have*, was acquired merely to read a few productions of their best authors, and be able to form some *comparative* idea of their merits or defects.

I am far from denying to this people the praise of great genius. But I should suppose, that it is not properly cultivated; and the reason, perhaps, may be, that, in *modern* Italy, learning meets but with little encouragement.

The bad taste of the Italians, in *poetry*, is obvious from many instances. Dante, in *their* estimation, is superior to *all* men; and Ariosto, whom they consider as much beneath him, they exalt far above Homer himself.

Dante



Dante had, doubtless, wonderful abilities. He rises, in many instances, to the sublime; and, for the times in which he lived, may justly be considered as a literary *prodigy*. But his work, on the whole, is but a *gothick* mass of various kinds of knowledge strangely heaped together without arrangement, design, or perspicuity. To compare *him* with the *author of the Iliad*, is to betray a total want of all the principles of enlightened criticism.

Ariosto shines in narrative. He tells a story with gracefulness and ease. Some of his descriptions are particularly splendid; and his Orlando Furioso is a lively, and wonderfully various production. But how frequently does he fall into ridiculous absurdities, where he entirely loses sight of nature and of truth, forgetting that excellent rule of a judicious critick:

Tout doit tendre au bon sens;

Rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable.

Let *sense* be ever in your view,  
 Nothing is *beautiful*, that is not *true*;  
 The *true* alone is lovely.

Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* has, indisputably, great merit. The subject is grand, and very happily chosen; the language, elegant; the versification, harmonious: but who can say, that it does not abound with false thoughts, with infinite instances of *playing upon words* and a prodigious quantity of tinsel, or that it is not, in *the main*, disfigured with low conceits, and trifling puerilities?

No Italian writer *interests* so much, or has so nicely developed the human heart, as *Metastasio*. He had great advantages by being introduced, at an early period of his life, into the family of the celebrated Gravina, and there learning to explode the false taste of his country. He formed himself on the model of the ancients. He took Boileau and Horace for his guides, and few men have succeeded better in painting *tender* scenes,

or leaving a *durable* impression on the heart. Read his Canzonettes, particularly that which begins with *Grazie agl' inganni tuoi*; and tell me, whether I have formed an improper judgment.

## LETTER XXXIII.

I HAVE now finished my recommendation of authors. I am apprehensive, indeed, of having mentioned too many. But from the whole, you can *select* the few you like, or which it is most convenient for you to purchase.

Some of these books, particularly those which treat on religious subjects, may not entertain you so much *at present*, as they will at some future period, when your taste and judgement are more effectually ripened; but I did not know whether *then* I might have the opportunity of writing to you, or whether I should

should even be in the world; and I wished to give you something of a *systematic* plan, that might be consulted through every stage of your life.

The criticisms upon books, characters, &c. have not been introduced from a fastidious spirit, or with a view of displaying learning and talents, but to exercise and improve *your discriminating* faculties, and enliven the, *otherwise*, dull uniformity of didactic letters. I have only presumed to give my opinion; and to *this*, in a land of liberty, and in an enlightened age, I conceive myself to have an equal right with the first scholar or critic of the world.

*Louisa*, you well know, is not a *fictitious*, but a *real* character; and, though my partiality may have heightened her merit, yet after all, it is inexpressibly great; and I introduced her, as a pattern of female graces, merely to avoid the *formality* of precepts, and the *authoritative* airs of a teacher. I considered this  
mode,



mode, as likely to communicate some little *interest* and variety to my letters; and *that* appeared to me a motive, which, with *all* young people, should be consulted.

On the whole, consider me not as *dogmatizing*, but only as communicating to you, with great freedom and sincerity, the best sentiments I can; those, which convince your understanding, receive with candour; the rest reject, and do not fancy me so conceited, as even for a moment, to have persuaded myself, that from *my* tribunal, there lies no appeal.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

**I**F I was called upon to write the history of a *woman's* trials and sorrows, I would date it from the moment, when nature has pronounced her *marriageable*, and she feels that innocent desire of associating with the other sex, which needs not a blush. If I had a girl of my own, at this *critical* age, I should be full of the keenest apprehensions for her safety; and, like the great poet, when the tempter was bent on seducing our first parents from their innocence and happiness, I should invoke the assistance of some *guardian* angel, to conduct her through the slippery and dangerous paths.

You

You must remember the passage;

“O for that warning voice, which he,  
who heard,” &c.

Marriage is, doubtless, the most natural, innocent and useful state, if you can form it to any tolerable advantage. It bids fairest for that *little* portion of happiness, which this life admits; and is, in some degree, a duty, which we owe to the world. If entered into from *proper* motives, it is a source of the greatest benefits to the *community*, as well as of private comfort to ourselves. What are the highest blessings, unsweetened by society? How poignant are many sorrows of life, without a friend to alleviate and divide them! How many are the moments, how many are the exigencies, in which we want sympathy, tenderness, attention! And what is a moping *individual* to the world, compared with the woman, who acts in the tender character of a wife, or parent, and, by a religious

religious culture of an offspring, is training up inhabitants for the kingdom of heaven.

A *single* woman is, particularly, defenceless. She cannot move beyond the precincts of her house, without apprehensions. She cannot go with ease or safety, into publick. She is surrounded with many, real dangers, and fancy conjures up *more* spectres of its own, to disturb her repose.

As she goes down the *hill* of life, her friends *gradually* drop away from her, like leaves in the autumn, and leave her a pining, *solitary* creature. Even *brothers* and *sisters*, when married themselves, lose their *usual* fondness for *her*, in the ardours of a newly acquired connection; and she wanders through a wide, bustling world, uncomfortable in herself, uninteresting to others, frequently the sport of wanton ridicule, or a proverb of reproach.

Men



*Men* are often too much engrossed with business, ambition, or criminal pursuits, to think very seriously of this connection; but if they happen to remain *single*, their very efforts become their amusement, and keep them from experiencing that *unquiet* indolence, which, by *enervating* the mind, powerfully awakens imagination and the senses. A *woman* has abundant leisure to *brood* over her inquietude, and to nurse the vapours, till they terminate in disease. She has not so many methods for *dissipating* thought. Her element is her *household*, and the *management* of her children; and till she becomes a *mother*, she has not objects of consequence enough to occupy the mind, and preserve it from feeling unpleasant agitations.

I mean not, however, to insinuate, that there is any thing really *reproachful* in *virginity*, unless a woman *chooses* to render it such, by verifying the stigmas, which have been fixed upon it, and *substantiating*, in  
her

her *own* practice, the malevolence, envy, scandal, curiosity and spleen, which have, so often, *sarcastically* been imputed to the *sisterhood*. It *may* be, and, sometimes, *is*, the choice of very amiable women, who would not marry *any*, but the man of their affections, or with whom they had a *rational* prospect of happiness; who having been, by death or disappointment, deprived of *one*, had a delicacy, that never admitted the idea of a *second*, attachment, or who were not so devoid of principle and taste, as to be connected with a *dissolute*, drunken, or *abandoned* person, whatever might be his fortune, or consequence, or connections. Women, who act from *such* principles, may be exposed to the *indelicate* scoffs of the *licentious*, but must have the unreserved esteem and veneration of all the sensible and the good.

It should not, however, be dissembled, (for it arises from *natural* principles,) that *married* women are generally more pleasing,

pleasing, than such, as never formed this connection. Their heart is continually refined, softened and enlarged by the exercise of all the *tender* feelings to an offspring, whilst the weighty concerns of their particular families raise them above that *frivolous* insipidity, which, with *whatever* justice, is the *proverbial* stigma of a single state.

A married woman, likewise, has banished that shy reserve, which *young* ladies *think* themselves, and, indeed, in some degree, *are* obliged to practise, but which, necessary as it may be, conceals many of their loveliest graces. The society, moreover, of a *sensible* man gives, to a female, a richer fund of ideas, a superior mode of *thinking* and acting, agreeably tempers her vivacity with seriousness, and introduces her to many *improving* acquaintance, and entertaining circles, from which the *ceremonious coldness* of a *virgin* state, must have kept her, at an *unapproachable* distance.

Be

Be not, however disappointed, if all your merit and amiableness do not secure to you *such* a connection, as your principles and judgment can approve.

The lives of young men are so *undomesticated*, and indeed so criminal, that deserving women, in the present age, are far from receiving those attentions and civilities, to which, on every principle of justice and politeness, they are certainly entitled.

In proportion as the *morals* of men are depraved, marriage will, always, be unfashionable and rare; and there are thousands amongst us, who have neither knowledge, sense, or virtue enough, to wish for all that delicacy of friendship, sprightliness of conversation, or ease of manners, which only an accomplished woman can bestow, or for those innocent, *domestick* enjoyments, which communicate the highest *flavour* to, and are the grand and ultimate end of, an intercourse betwixt the sexes.



Pleas of *inability* to *support* a family, of the *expensiveness* of wives, and their propensity to splendour and dissipation, are used, I know, by some to soften their misconduct, and throw a *flimsy* veil over their crimes.

This is not a *proper* place for reasoning with *libertines* or rakes. Still, from their arguments, however trifling or fallacious, you may deduce this useful lesson; that an extravagant turn for finery and shew is a great disadvantage to *every* woman; that it is adverse to all her *happiest* prospects, and prevents not a few from ever addressing her, who, in reality, might have been the most faithful and obliging companions through life. Though immoral persons make this apology, from very *unjustifiable* motives, yet many others, in moderate circumstances, might advance it with truth; who, though they neither want integrity, knowledge, nor a sensibility to the charms and merit of a woman, would

would, yet, never think of *degrading* her to a condition, which they conceive to be beneath her wishes and her habits.

I have long considered the immoderate expensiveness of young ladies, as, by no means, favourable to their prospects or happiness, in *any* view. No parent can take a more certain method to make a daughter's life a scene of continual irritation and misfortune, than by thus ridiculously training her to high *expectations*. It has been the *gradual* death of many; it has made the existence of *others* a burden, heavy to be borne. Nor can there even, in point of real taste, be a greater *mistake* in education. *True* dignity consisteth not in tinsel or shew, The nearest approach we can make to *superior* spirits, is to have as *few* wants, as possible, whilst we inhabit this tene-ment of clay.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXV.

**I**N your *manner* with the sex at large,  
I could wish you to avoid the *modern*  
forwardness, as well as that *shy reserve*,  
which throws a damp on all the *innocent*  
gaieties of life. The first bears upon its  
face, a *masculine* indelicacy; the other is  
the effect of downright prudery, ill breed-  
ing, or affectation.

Some women affect a *coldness* in their  
deportment, and act, as if they supposed  
that every man, who approaches them,  
had a design on their person. Alas!  
how miserably are they deceived! How  
ridiculous is the vanity which gives birth  
to such a conduct!

Men are so much engaged in busi-  
ness, pleasure, and the amusements  
of the world, that the conquest of a  
*female* heart is often thought *beneath*  
their *ambition*. At any rate, it is *time*

enough to be upon your guard, when you really perceive them bent on making *serious* advances.

Many of them will approach you with *flattery*. This, they have been led to think, the only, current coin, with the generality of females. If it be not very *gross*, bear it with good humour. Though you may *despise*, do not wantonly return, it with contempt. This is the method to make them enemies, and put them on avoiding your society for ever. You may easily be civil, and yet convince them by your looks and manner, that you perfectly understand how to appreciate *indiscriminate* complaisance.

Though, by no means, *seriously* bent upon *matrimony*, yet not a few of them, will pay you flattering attentions. *These*, if you be not cautious, may, very insensibly, soften your heart, and ensnare your affections, particularly if they come from men, whose *general* character or manners



manners you esteem. One caution, therefore, permit me to give you, with an *assurance* that it must be *religiously* observed, as you value either your dignity or repose—never to believe any man in *earnest*, till he makes the most *pointed* declarations in your favour.

*Fashion* has made it so much a matter of *form* to pay attentions to a woman, and particularly, if she is smart, witty, beautiful; if she is celebrated for high connections, or accomplishments, or makes a good figure in publick, that numbers of men will be *mechanically* led to flutter about you, who, *in fact*, mean only to *amuse* the moment, or do honour to their own good breeding and politeness.

Believe me, my dear girl, this gay and *lively* season will *soon* be at an *end*. Girls, that dwell on every body's tongue, and sport away, in all their gaudy colours, during *summer* months, like butterflies, are never heard of in the

winter, but sink into a *torpid* state. They do not, however, resemble some insects in the very happy, and enviable, privilege of rising with *renewed* charms. Once forgotten, they seldom revive, but are *displaced* by *other*, rising favourites for ever; and it has often been observed, that *those* women are most rarely thought of for wives, with whom we are the fondest of (what is called,) flirting, and of saying a thousand, civil things, without meaning or *design*.

With men of principle and integrity, you are always secure. They will religiously beware of engaging your affections, without honourable views. But *these* alas! where *women* are concerned, are not so numerous, as might be expected. More breaches of fidelity are observable in this intercourse, than in any other instance of the most trifling importance.

To entertain a *secret* partiality for a man, without knowing it *reciprocal*, is dreadful

dreadful indeed. . If you have address and fortitude enough not to betray it, and thus expose yourself to ridicule and censure, (and, yet, what prudence is *always* equal to the task?) it will cost you infinite grief, anxiety and vexation; and a victory over yourself, if you *do* gain it, may be at the expence of your health and constitution. It will, at the same time, totally unfit you for *any other* connection; for who would take the *body*, when another person is in possession of the *soul*?

If any man, therefore, can *deliberately* be so cruel, as to visit you frequently, and shew you every *particularity*, that is only short of this *grand* explanation, never see him in private; and, if that be insufficient, and you *still* feel tender sentiments towards him, determine to shun his company for ever. It is easier, remember, to extinguish a fire, that has but *just* broken out, than one, which has been gathering strength and *violence*,

from a long *concealment*. Many have neglected this necessary precaution, and died silent *martyrs* to their fondness and imprudence. The eye of beauty has *languished* in solitude, or been dimmed with a flood of *irremediable* tears. The heart has throbbed with *unconquerable* tumults, which, *gradually* have dissolved an *elegant* frame, that deserved a much *better* fate. Undiscovered by the physician, they have baffled all the resources of his skill; they have rendered ineffectual all the tenderness of friends, and *death* alone has administered that ease, which neither beauty, friends, nor fortune could bestow.

It is possible, that men may not *always* act from *unamiable* motives, when they carry their attentions to a considerable height, without an *explanation*. Their taste may have privately singled you out from all the rest of the world, whilst Providence has not propitiously raised them to circumstances, which they  
conceive



conceive to be worth your acceptance. They may have a delicacy, a dignity, and independence of mind, which would not easily brook a *repulse*, or an *inferior* situation; and they may be, *very honourably*, probing by these, little methods, the state of your inclinations.

Of *these* circumstances you must endeavour to judge for yourself, or get some discerning, *impartial* and more *experienced* friend to be your adviser. If you suspect a person's conduct to arise from *such* motives, you cannot treat him with too much attention. He has paid you, in the most delicate and flattering manner, the highest compliment in the world; and you may depend on his affection being more *sincere*, in proportion as it is less assuming, confident, or *obtrusive*.

If you *have* any regard for such a character, his penetration will have discovered it. Use no *affectation* to him. He will see through all its flimsy disguises.

guises. Attempt no *prudery*; he will behold your bosom panting through the thin, *slight* veil, and the hypocrisy will disgust. Talk not of *fortune* or *circumstances*; they have been the objects of his consideration. I know no method, but, with an honest candour, to throw yourself, a fair, enchanting object, on his generous *protection*. If by any *concealment*, you should hurt that self-conscious dignity and affection, which will, always, attend such a mind, as this, he will never again sue to your *clemency*, but leave you to ruminate on the artifices, you have used, in an hopeless repentance.

If you suppose, on the other hand, that any person *dallies* with your feelings from *wantonness*, or mere amusement, you cannot shew him too marked a contempt. Though delicacy will not permit you to glance at the *particular* impropriety of his conduct, yet there are a *thousand* methods of making him feel his

his own *insignificance*, and of changing the little plumage of his vanity, into a monument of his shame.

There is something so *unmanly* in sporting with the tender feelings of a *woman*; there is something so truly despicable in the character of a person, who wishes a consequence, built upon the tears and distresses of those, whom all great and generous minds are disposed to protect, that if a female coquette is odious to *your* sex, a male one should be doubly abhorred by his *own*.

If a person once comes to a *serious* declaration in your favour, affect no *prudish* airs of reserve. If you really, feel an affection for him, and can indulge it with *prudence*, do not scruple to acknowledge it, or to treat him with the greatest *openness* and candour. This will engage, for ever, the esteem of every *liberal* and *honest* man. If, from any circumstances, unforeseen, at the time, you should be under the necessity

of *dismissing* him, as a *lover*, you will never fail to retain him, as a *friend*; and though, with a base, *designing* person, such a conduct may expose you to some little inconvenience, yet *whose* will be the disgrace? Leave him to the contempt and indignation of the sensible, and let him make the most of the *godlike* reflection, that he has endeavoured to triumph over *artless innocence*, and unsuspecting sensibility.

There is, generally, too much *affectation* of coyness in this intercourse betwixt the sexes. I have no idea of a woman's *blushing* to *avow* an attachment. If she *has* it indeed, it will appear to a penetrating mind, even from her very efforts to *conceal* it. The involuntary *embarrassment*, the timid look, the modest blush, and the downcast eye are indisputable symptoms of a strong partiality, which cannot either be concealed or mistaken.

Your



Your sex, I know, have ideas of suspense, and fancy, that it heightens the merit of the prize. But I dare not recommend such a *dangerous* expedient. If the cunning be discovered, the punishment may be a lasting coldness and neglect. I do not know any thing, so really graceful as *unaffected simplicity*.

Never disclose the offers or preferences you receive, except to those friends, who are immediately interested in your decision. They are *secrets of honour*, which you should carry *inviolate* to your grave. It is ungenerous to make a man, the subject of observation, perhaps, of *ridicule*, because he has tendered you his warmest affections; and the envy of your *own* sex will not be disposed to spare you, for such a palpable display of vanity and pride. If you intend to *marry*, it is the highest *impolicy*; and if you mean to *dismiss* him, it is *cruel* to aggravate dismissal with contempt.

## LETTER XXXVI.

FROM the unfavourable sketch, I have given of the morals and sentiments of young men, it is not probable, that a woman of the greatest merit, will have any prodigious number of admirers to *distract* her choice. Generally, in the *present* state of things, if a lady will be married, she has a number of accommodations to make, many wishes to sacrifice, and many instances of private taste to be resigned. She must be content with a fortune *merely* without expecting many good or *great* qualities, annexed; or if she seek the latter, she must *often* forego all hopes of the former.

If, however, you *should* have a number of suitors, (and, without any compliment, it is not impossible,) there are a few, general principles of most *essential*

*essential* consequence to regulate your choice.

Fortune, splendour, greatness are the *alone* cry of mercenary friends. I am not *wholly* of *their* opinion. I have seen many *wretched* in marriage, with all the trappings of greatness. I have known a still greater number happy, who have had only "a dinner of herbs, and *love* therewith."

Do not suffer your imagination to be dazzled with *mere* splendour. Never fancy, that *brilliance* is connected with the *mind*, or that the happiness of women, any more than that of men, "consisteth in the abundance of the things, that she possesseth."

An *immoderate* fondness for *shew* is a great *misfortune*. It has led many a poor girl to sacrifice herself to some illiterate boor, who had nothing but his *affluence* to recommend him. If such should ever be your misfortune, I need not mention, what would be your feel-

ings,

ings. If you was prudent enough to avoid all *other* evil consequences, (and many such, experience records, but delicacy forbears to mention,) you might live to envy the ruddy, *unambitious* villager, whose toils are sweetened by *conjugal* attachment, and whose *blooming* children cheer the *seeming* infelicities of life.

How wretched must be a woman, united to a man whom she does not prefer to every other in the world ! What secret preferences must steal into her heart ! What unquiet thoughts take possession of her fancy ! And what can men of principle call such an act, but *legal prostitution* ?

If I was a despotick tyrant, I would inflict this punishment on the woman I abhorred. She should entertain a private partiality for *one* person, and be married to *another*.

Never suffer yourself to think of a person who has not *religious principle*.

A good



A good man *alone* is capable of true attachment, fidelity and affection.

Others may feel a *fugitive* passion; but on this, alas! you can place no dependence. It may be abated by caprice, supplanted by some new favourite, palled by *possession*, and, at any rate, will last no longer than your *personal* charms; though those charms may have faded by *almost* laying down your *life* for their sake, by bringing them a beautiful offspring into the world.

During the flattering season of *courtship*, men will always endeavour to appear in their *best* colours, and put on all the appearance of *good humour*. But supposing this good humour *real*, it is but a *fluctuating*, unsteady, principle, depending on the motion of the *blood and spirits*. Nothing, but *religion*, is permanent and *unchangeable*, always consistent, and always the same.

A man

A man of *this* cast will never fail to treat you with *tenderness* and attention. If little provocations happen, he will soften them with gentleness; if offences come, he will be shielded with patience; if his own temper be unhappy, he will correct it by the assistance of divine grace and of reflection; if misfortunes assail you, he will bear them with resignation; in every exigence, he will be a friend; in all your troubles, a stay; in your sickness, a physician; and, when the last, convulsive moment comes, he will leave you with his tears, and with his blessings. All his *impetuous passions* he will suppress, from a sense of *duty*; and if ever by an *unguarded* folly, he should unfortunately have hurt your feelings, or violated your peace, he will suffer more pain from the private recollection, than he can possibly have inflicted upon you. Ten thousand cares, anxieties, and vexations will mix with the married state. Religion is the only principle,

principle, that can infuse an healing balm, inspire *both* parties with serenity and hope, dispose them to *mutual* concessions and forbearance, and prompt them to share each others burdens with alacrity and ease.

Gay and volatile as your spirits may be *before* this union, when, as yet, no *great* trials or misfortunes have pressed on them, yet when you seriously think of having a family, and calling yourself mother of a numerous offspring, what possible comfort can you promise to yourself, without a man of *solid* probity and virtue; one, who will be regular in the discharge of all the religious, social, and domestick duties; who will faithfully train up your *common* children in the fear of God, and not neglect their many interests, and wants, and wishes for the turbid and licentious pleasures of the bottle, gaming, intrigue, the chace, the theatre, or for any other scenes of fashionable dissipation?

The

The *next* thing you should look for, is a person of a *domestick* cast. This will, most frequently, be found in men of the most virtuous hearts and improved understandings. *They* will always have abundance of entertainment in private, unknown to *vulgar* minds. And these will secure them from seeking their happiness in the *factitious* pleasures of the world.

Of what consequence are all the good qualities of your husband, if you must be constantly *separated* from him? Your tenderness, in this case, will only be the instrument of a poignant affliction; your anxiety will be perpetually on the rack; your *jealousy* may be alarmed; and, in the best point of view, you will be a widow, with only a *nominal* husband, and unprotected, with all the *appearance* of protection.

Men, whose circumstances absolutely require such *absences*, should never think of this tender connection. It is this  
*necessary*



*necessary* separation *after* marriage, and the *artificial* one, which *fashion* has created, that are the cause of half the disquiets, which infest this sacred state. True affection is only nursed by the parties living much together, in the stillness of retirement. It is in the *shade*, chiefly, that the purest affections glow. It is from dwelling on the graces of a common offspring, and repeating, in the ease of familiar conversation, little domestic anecdotes, playfulness, and events, that matrimonial friendship rises to its proper maturity and vigour. By constantly growing together, even *branches* become inseparably intertwined.

The *last* thing, though I do not mention it as absolutely necessary, yet highly desirable in a person, with whom you must spend *all* your days, is *sentiment and taste*. This will variegate every hour with a succession of pleasure, every scene with animated remarks, every incident with fresh conversation, and will  
make

make a little paradise of your deepest solitude, in which you will never want the poor resources of *foreign* entertainment.

*Fortune* surely should be considered. It were absurd to think of love, where there is not some prospect of a *decent* provision for your probable descendents. That decency depends on birth, habit, and education. But if you can compass the *other* requisites, be as moderate as possible, in your demands of fortune. Virtue and affection have an amazing power of inspiring contentment. A morsel, thus sweetened, will be pleasant to the taste. In a cottage, so enlivened, joy will spring. Children, so educated, will be rich in goodness. The Almighty will look down from *heaven*, with approbation, and crown the happy pair with the choicest of his blessings!

LETTER

## LETTER XXXVII.

**N**EVER think of marrying a *weak* man, in hopes of *governing* him. Silly people are often more peevish and refractory, than you would suppose; but if you could even gain your point, and by great address and management rise to the *helm*, I should not, by any means, congratulate your success.

Women, that assume the reins, seldom manage them with *dignity*. Their authority breaks forth in numberless petty instances of tyranny and caprice, which only render them miserable in themselves, as well as unamiable to every beholder. The quality which shews a married lady to advantage, is a modest *submission* of her understanding to the man, whom  
she

she has not been ashamed to honour with her choice.

I have frequently mentioned Milton, as peculiarly happy in his ideas of what constitutes *conjugal* propriety. *His* Eve reveres her husband. She listens to his conversation, in order to be instructed. In *him*, she feels herself *annihilated* and absorbed. She always shews that deference and consciousness of *inferiority*, which, for the sake of *order*, the all-wise Author of nature, *manifestly*, intended. The consequence is, that her character appears lovely to all, and that her associate, (as all sensible men *will*,) treats her with *double* tenderness, and gives her every mark of a delicate protection:

He, in delight

Both of her beauty, and *submissive* charms,  
Smil'd with superior love.

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorn'd:

My *author* and disposer, what *thou* bidd'st,

Unargu'd I obey; so *God* ordains;

*God* is *thy* law; *thou*, mine; to know *no more*

Is *woman's* happiest knowledge and her Praise.

When



When men have lived single for fifty or sixty years, through a multiplicity of business, ambitious schemes, or perhaps from more *criminal* causes, it is no uncommon thing to see them, all at once, determined on wedlock, and paying their court to some fine, *blooming* girl of *eighteen*. Indeed, in the *present* state of things, if a woman be not married *early*, her chance is small; so violent is the rage for youth and beauty, even in *decrepit* *beaus*!

There is something in this practice, that very grossly insults both your delicacy and understanding. It looks, as if these *sovereign lords* of the creation, at the moment, when they *condescended* to pity your *distress*, and found no comfort in habits of another kind, could order the most elegant and fashionable amongst you, to come at a *call*!

It is true, indeed, that they *do* make you a consideration. Your jointure is, generally, in proportion to the age of the party.

party. The hundreds are increased, as the head is hoary, as the frame is enfeebled, or as wrinkles have contracted the countenance.

Never indulge the thought of marrying in this manner. Wherever there is great *disparity* of years, there cannot be any durable union of hearts. Gloom and gaiety do not easily assimilate. Nature has placed, at a great distance from each other, the torrid and the frigid zones.

People's views of life, their sentiments, projects, companies, pleasures and amusements differ so exceedingly, at these different ages, that it is impossible their affections should be united. A thousand conflicts of taste and opinion, and as many causes of jealousy and dislike will mingle with so *injudicious* a connection.

A woman, in such *delicate* circumstances, where the heart is not engrossed by a *real* attachment, *may*, and probably *will*, see many persons more agreeable,  
than

than him, to whom she is bound by an indissoluble tie. If she has prudence and principle enough to keep up appearances, and thus preserve her innocence in the eyes of the world, it can be no *supreme* felicity to be the wife of one man, whilst her heart is secretly panting for another. It is, indeed, a trial, which no splendour can recompense and no fortune ease. If she should ever be so unguarded, as to *betray* such a preference, in any part of her conduct, her peace and happiness are lost for ever! But admitting her to behave with the greatest propriety, and even to be attached to the *Sultan*, who owns her, still the *jealousy* of old men is a most amazingly irritable passion. It is that watchful dragon, which guards the Hesperian fruit; and with a keen eyed glance, will be apt to discover some hidden meaning in a look, impropriety in a gesture, or a violation of the marriage covenant in the most common

civility. At any rate, it is no very flattering allotment to a woman, to be the *nurse* of a peevish, infirm, or emaciated, old man, at an age, when she might claim the most delicate passion, and *reciprocal* endearments. What woman of spirit would *bear* to be suspected? What christian should vow, at the *altar* of her God, an affection to a *man*, when her attachment was solely to his *fortune*? And who, that has read one page of human life, must not tremble at the consequences, that have, generally, attended such imprudent connections?

“A reformed rake makes the best husband.” Does he? It would be very extraordinary, if he should. Besides, are you very certain, that you have *power* to reform him? It is a matter, that requires some deliberation. This reformation, if it is to be accomplished, must take place before marriage. *Then*, if *ever*, is the period of *your* power. But how will you be assured that he is reformed?



reformed? If he *appears* so, is he not insidiously *concealing* his vices, to gain your affections? And when he knows, they are secured, may he not, gradually, throw off the mask, and be dissipated, as before? Profligacy of this kind is seldom eradicated. It resembles some *cutaneous* disorders, which *appear* to be healed, and yet are, continually, making themselves visible by fresh eruptions.

A man, who has carried on a criminal intercourse with immoral women, is not to be trusted. His opinion of *all* females is an insult to their delicacy. His attachment is to *sex* alone, under particular *modifications*. On *him*, virtue, knowledge, accomplishments, and graces, are miserably thrown away. To gratify an inextinguishable thirst for *variety*, such a wretch is often seen to forsake the most deserving wife, to seek his usual, *fugitive* pleasure, with an abandoned, mercenary harlot.

K 2

What

What would you think of this? Yet no graces, no affection, no delicacy, on your part, may be able to prevent it. It seems the *curse* of heaven, entailed on his vices, and, generally, pursues him even to the grave.

The supposed predilection of your sex for *rakes*, must, probably, arise from their ostentatious appearance, gaiety, spirits and assumed politeness. But how dearly is such tinsel purchased by an union with them! How often has a *long*, harrassed life of poverty and remorse been the dreadful sacrifice to this indiscretion of a *moment*!

LETTER

## LETTER XXXVII.

MEN in professions may be expected to possess the most *liberal* sentiments, as having enjoyed a superior education; and their manners and society will, of course, be most agreeable and interesting to ladies. Military people are, *proverbially*, favourites.

I will not so much degrade the dignity of your sex, as to suppose, that it is the mere colour of their habits, which *dazzles* your eyes, and works such astonishing *miracles* in their favour. There are reasons, which may account, more *rationally*, for your partiality, whilst they do more credit to your understanding.

Undistracted with cares and business, they are happy in that easy *disengagedness* of mind, which can exhaust all its efforts

upon the single article of *pleasing*. With much time upon their hands, they have frequent opportunities of being in your company, and of feeling, or at least, *affecting* admiration. Lively and volatile from an healthy life of activity and exercise, they easily assimilate with the manners of a sex, whose distinguishing grace is a cheerful vivacity. Having travelled through various places and kingdoms, they necessarily acquire that ease and urbanity of manners, which result from a *general* intercourse with mankind. Expected, *professionally*, to be men of courage, you may *suppose* them the best protectors of your person and your weakness. Their very choice of the army marks them for *genteel* notions and spirit; and any of these reasons is, perhaps, no disadvantage with a female heart. I should be sorry to suppose, that their general love of pleasure, gaiety, and *intrigue*, is amongst their recommendations to the favour of those, who *should*,  
uniformly,



uniformly, discourage by their *blushes* and their *frowns*, every species of levity and vice.

In fact, and to be impartial, the agreeableness of officers, is like that of *other* men. There is the *human* mixture of the good and the bad. I have always found, from my own observation, that the older and experienced are some of the most interesting characters in society. The various scenes through which they have passed, give a sprightliness and *diversity* to their conversation, and their politeness lends it a charm. I have met with as many of the *younger* sort, who have seemed to think the *petty* ornament of a cockade, an adequate substitute for all improvements of the mind; a shelter for litigious insolence and *suppiness*, and an exclusive security for the tenderest affections, and attachment of woman.

But this evil is not confined, merely, to the *army*. It is so in the *church*. How truly amiable are the experienced,

the learned, and the exemplary of this profession, whose knowledge is happily tissued with devotion, and softened by a general intercourse with the world! How many, on the other hand, when they are just initiated into the sacred office, ridiculously pique themselves on a *cassock* and a *scarf*; and, under that solemn garb, go as far as possible in the mazes of beauism, vanity, and affectation!

There are, doubtless, very amiable people in the army; but their *general* notions and treatment of your sex, forbid me to wish, that you should, ever, cultivate much acquaintance with them, because the circumstances, in which they are placed, render the thoughts of a *serious* connection, by no means desirable. If we could suppose their *principles* not to be injured by their *mode* of life; if they could resign, from the moment of marriage, all their notions of unlimited gallantry and pleasure, what is their pay, but a scanty subsistence for a solitary individual?

individual? What is their life, but an unsettled pilgrimage from one country to another? How often are they called, at a *moment's* warning, to fight, perhaps to *perish*, for their king and country? or, to die more suddenly, and more ignominiously, by the hands of a Duellist, who challenges them into *eternity* for the slightest provocation, perhaps for the misplacing only of a syllable!

In the midst of such alarming prospects, what has a woman to expect from marriage with them, but continual toils, unceasing dangers, perpetual apprehensions; poverty, remorse, vexation,—children, without provision, and sorrows, which the *lenient* hand of time, scarcely can assuage!

If you was ever so happily united to a man of this description, how dreadful must be the absences you will have to bear, mixed, as they will be, with a dissolving tenderness, and unavoidable alarms; or, on the other hand, how insup-

portable your toils, " with perils in the  
" wilderness, perils by the sea, and perils  
" amongst false brethren ; with weariness,  
" and painfulness, with watchings, often ;  
" with hunger and thirst ; with fastings,  
" often ; with cold and nakedness." Remember the fate of lady C—w—s, and drop a tear. That gaiety of heart, which, *once*, doted on a man for his smartness or vivacity, will find *too much* exercise for its penitence and grief in such *serious* afflictions.

## L E T T E R XXXVIII.

**I**N *several* requisites to an happy marriage, *professional* men do not appear, by any means, the most eligible.

A great writer has called a physician, " the mere play-thing of fortune." However straitened in his circumstances, from having received an expensive education,



cation, he must assume, particularly in the *metropolis*, the *appearance* of property merely to gain employment. This *fititious* grandeur may involve him in difficulties for *many years*. His success, from the nature of things, must, generally, be *slow*, nor will it ever depend so much on his *own* intrinsic merit, as on a fortunate coincidence of circumstances, wholly out of his power. If he succeeds, it will, frequently, be *late in life*; and, if he does *not*, he must be embarrassed indeed! The children of *such* a person “cannot dig, and to beg they are ashamed.” Poverty, sharpened by *refinement* and *sensibility*, is afflicting in the extreme!

I do not think the profession of the *law*, calculated to render a man the most agreeable companion in the still, unruffled shades of domestick life. It calls into continual exercise, the more *turbid* passions; it begets an unpleasant spirit of cavilling and contradiction, and

has less a tendency to nurse the *finer* feelings, than any of the other learned professions.

By being crowded together, at a *dangerous* age, in the Temple or Lincoln's Inn, young men are apt to contract a licentiousness of *morals*, a *laxity* of principles, a species of *scepticism*, to palliate their vices, habits of *profaneness*, not a little dissipation, and, so far as *your* sex is concerned, very dangerous notions.

*Before* marriage, military men and young lawyers are not, in my idea, the safest acquaintance. The first are only bent, without looking any further, on *domesticating* themselves, in agreeable families, by every polite attention to *wives and daughters*, and thus amusing many leisure hours, which, in their state of continual peregrination, would be, otherwise, insupportable; the latter, in general, scruple not to go great lengths in gallantry, where they have no *serious* intention.

Beware

Beware of *such* society ; beware of your heart. Let not the *unblushing* front of a barrister, let not the mere *scarlet habit* of a *petit maitre*, who has studied the windings of the female heart, infinitely more than tactics, or the art of war, let not a few civil sayings or flattering attentions, beguile your imagination, or lay your prudence asleep. I do not think the commerce very safe. If I had a girl of my own, I would not expose her to so *dangerous* a trial. Many, doubtless, have come off conquerors, but *more* have fallen ; and their wounds and tears have made, upon *my* memory, a *lasting* impression.

Our imagination, however, annexes riches, honours, and even titles to the profession of the law. But this fancy often *misleads* us. It is true, that merit has a greater chance in *this*, than in any other profession ; and it is certain, that a fortunate *few* have attained to very considerable greatness. We hear of a Mansfield,

field, a Thurlow, a Kenyon, a Loughborough, a Law, an Erskine, and are dazzled with their names, their success, and honours. But not a word is said of a thousand others of the fraternity, whom, though possessed of considerable talents, fortune never chose to bring into the publick view, or to distinguish with any of her favours.

But all these discouragements apart, if a lawyer is *eminent*, he can scarcely ever be at *home*. *Perpetual* cares and business surround him, and poison his repose. His wife and children must be *neglected*, and domestick endearments sacrificed to *tumultuous* cares. And if he be poor, no poverty can open the door to more chicanery, artifice, or meanness. At *any* rate, if he be a man of pure morals and religious principles, he has withstood the greatest temptations, that human nature can encounter, and for superior and heroic virtue, almost deserves a place in the kalendar of saints.

See



See now a man's partiality to his *own* profession; but if it be not founded in reason, I beg you will reject it.

The office of *clergymen* calls them to a more regular and retired life, than that of most other men. Their exemption from the bustle and competitions of the world nures innocence and sensibility; and if their heart be not *very depraved*, their employments and studies must *soften* and refine it. Their education *should* have given them the power of entertaining, and their calling *supposes* not only *integrity*, but piety and virtue.

A man of *this* cast seems particularly calculated not only to *relish*, but to *enhance* the happiness of a married state. With hours at command, he has leisure for the tender offices of friendship, and the little, *sportive* playfulness of amusing conversation. Whilst the woodbine and the jasmine surround his modest mansion, he dreads no *unpropitious* accident, that shall drag him from his retreat, and  
can

can tread, with the faithful partner of his cares, the lonely, " silent haunts, which contemplation loves." He has time for superintending the instruction of his children, and calling their latent powers into exercise and action. He has opportunity to *realize* the pictures of a Milton, and watch the opening beauties of the *paradise* about him.

Let me, however, be candid, and give you the *possible* reverse of this piece. The church is in a very unhappy situation. That education, which renders the ecclesiastick agreeable, often sharpens his affliction. That refinement, which captivates the elegant and inexperienced, is the spear, which fetches drops of blood from his heart. Frequently without an *adequate* provision, and incapable, by any *secular* employment, of *improving* his circumstances, these *apparent* privileges are only his misfortune. The sensibility, which *loves* a woman, doubly mourns her allotment. That tendernefs, which  
embraces

embraces children with such affection, *shudders* at their prospects. That independence, which results from *liberal* sentiments, startles at the thought of poverty or distress; and that peace, which he has found in the abodes of *solitude*, unfits him for the *turbulent* agitations of the world.

Many men, however, there are in this profession, very amply provided for ; and, if one of these falls to your lot, with the habits and dispositions that *should* result from his character, I think you may form every *rational* hope of comfort and enjoyment. Still, do not suppose me narrow or illiberal. There are, doubtless, numbers of worthy and amiable men in the *other* professions ; there are, as certainly, many *worthless*, *immoral*, and profligate persons in the *church*. *General* rules admit of infinite exceptions. And as your heart is disengaged, I meant only to state the influence of different habits and employments on the mind,

mind, and the probability of their conducing to happiness or misery in this *important* connection. And I *still* must urge, that if a clergyman *be* a bad husband, it is in defiance of the strongest *inducements* to be *otherwise*, and of every disposition, which his studies and his prayers should have led him, either to cultivate in *himself*, or recommend to *others*.

## LETTER XXXIX.

A MERE country squire will be more attached to his *dogs*, his *hunting parties*, and horses, than he could be to any wife in the world. The most lovely graces, the most exquisite accomplishments will make no impression on his *debased* and vitiated mind. He will not be able even to *discover* them. From *him*, you must expect none of the little,  
*soothing*



*soothing* attentions. He will shock your delicacy with a thousand coarsenesses, without a *sensibility* that he is doing wrong; and if you should expostulate, he will place it only to the account of female prudery, conceit, or affectation. He will converse with you *chiefly* on the *delicious* subjects of the bottle or the chase; and he will *occasionally* introduce you to the honour of an acquaintance with a number of ignorant ill bred boors, who will esteem you in exact proportion, as you want elegance of manner, sentiment, or understanding!

Young ladies never act so injudiciously, as when they sacrifice themselves to stupid vulgarity. Their charms are never lost on men of sense, delicacy, and politeness. By them their throne is established. It is in *their* hearts, that they have always a *sovereign* and undisputed sway.

I have now given you my sentiments very freely concerning a great variety of  
of

of characters. But, marry whom you will, one further lesson is necessary to your happiness, as well as that of the person, with whom you are connected—and that is—to consider your *home*, as the chief scene of your pleasures, and your *exertion*.

Though a woman, *before* this union, may be admired for her accomplishments of dancing, dress, painting, singing, &c. yet, *after* it, we expect her character to display something more *substantial*. To a man, who must spend his days in her company, all these little, superficial decorations will speedily become insipid and unimportant. Love must be preserved by the qualities of the heart, and esteem secured by the domestick virtues.

A man does not want to be *dazzled* in this connection, or to possess a partner, who seeks the admiration of coxcombs or beaus. He wants a person, who will kindly divide and alleviate his  
cares,

cares, and prudently arrange his household concerns. He seeks not a coquette, a fashionist, a flirt, but a comfortable assistant, companion and friend.

Let not a woman's fancy dream of *perpetual* admiration. Let it not be sketching out *endless* mazes of pleasure. The mistress of a family has ceased to be a *girl*. She can, *no longer*, be frivolous or childish with *impunity*. The *angel* of courtship has sunk into a woman; and that woman will be valued *principally* as her fondness lies in retirement, and her pleasures near the nursery of her children. Nor are these pleasures small. Whatever fashion thinks, they have a secret relish, which the world cannot give.

If *men* are expected to distinguish themselves by science, valour, eloquence, or the arts, a woman's greatest praise consists in the order and good *government* of her *family*. Nor is this beneath the *dignity* of any female in the world.

Never

Never is she *greater* than in such *condescension*. It spoils no features. It places the very finest in the happiest attitude, and in the most favourable light.

This exercise will be a sovereign preventative of the *vapours*; and every family, *without* it, must be a scene of disorder; a state of anarchy, in which there is no head to *govern*, and all the members seem unwilling to *obey*.

If we could see the inside of some fashionable houses, what a prospect would they present! The mistress at a masquerade or an opera—servants, drunken, extravagant, criminal!—Children, receiving their very first impressions from *their oaths and curses*—here, meat perishing, which might have fed the hungry—there, garments mouldering, which would have clothed the naked—in one place, filth and nastiness concealed—in another, valuable furniture tossed about, without decency and without care! No fortune can answer such im-



*moderate* expences. No comfort can consist with so much disorder. "A good woman looketh well to the ways of her household, and all her family is clothed in scarlet."

A turn for dissipation, in *any* woman, is unseemly, but, in a *married* one, it is *criminal* in the extreme. If she loves her children, what can so much entertain her, as their lively prattle, as their innocent endearments, or unfolding their latent powers? If she loves her husband, what other society can be half so soothing, or half so delightful?

The tour of a woman's gaiety should terminate with marriage. From that moment, her pursuits should be solid, and her pleasures circumscribed within the limits of her household. So much as this, she vowed at the altar: so much her interests and her happiness require.

A wife, who is always gadding about, virtually tells the world, that she is unhappy in her connection; that her  
vanity

vanity is most immoderate, or her taste most depraved.

What strips this union of its sweetest pleasures? What makes wives and husbands so indifferent to each other? Dissipation.

They spend so little time together in *private*; and it is chiefly in solitude, that affection springs.

If a man after the business and fatigues of the day, could return to an house, where a wife was engaged in domestick cares, and an attention to his offspring, he must be a monster of savageness and stupidity indeed, if he did not strongly feel the influence of her virtues, and if they did not convey a *soft* rapture to his soul.

What woman is most *really* admired in the world? The domestick. What woman has all the suffrages of the sensible, and the good? The domestick.

If I wished a lady's picture to appear to advantage, it should not be taken, when

when she was dressing for an assembly, a levee, or a birth night. She should be holding *one* lovely infant in her arms, and presenting a moral page, for the instruction of *another*.

Such a painter would give us the *finest* object in the world, and wrap *that* world, libertines and stoicks, in one, general admiration.

## LETTER XL.

I AM not at all surprized with the *insipid* life of the parties you mention. Their case is, by no means, uncommon. Nor would it have required any great penetration to have foretold the consequences of so hasty a connection.

The truth is, the gentleman was strictly, in the language of the world, a *beau d'esprit*, that is, he dressed smartly, frequented (what is esteemed) genteel com-

pany, and publick places, drank, hunted, ran into the extremes of fashion, and had some fortune to support it. In proportion as these little matters had engaged his mind, small attention had, you may suppose, been paid to the formation of his heart or understanding.

In this thoughtless period, it was the misfortune of this poor girl, with an elegant person and interesting manner, to fall in his way. She was beautiful; nature had designed her to please; and, if she had been connected with a sensible man, might have been moulded almost into any thing, that captivates in gracefulness, or astonishes in understanding. Her personal accomplishments inspired this *petit maitre* with a *fugitive* passion; his fortune was competent; dissimilarity of tastes, habits, or abilities, never was considered; tender tales were swallowed by her artless innocence, and his addresses were accepted. After a very short acquaintance, they are weary of each other.

The



The force of beauty and of passion is exhausted. He has not taste enough for the delicacies of friendship, nor knowledge to entertain a lonely hour with edifying conversation, but flies to the bottle and his mad companions, for pleasures, which it is not in *her* power to bestow; whilst she, poor creature! has leisure to brood over her imprudence and misfortunes in still, domestick scenes, having learned, but alas! too late, that rational and *durable* enjoyment is only to be found with a person of virtue, principle and understanding.

For my own part, I had never any idea of such *early* marriages. If this girl had seen the *world*, and a variety of characters, she would not have submitted to such a connection; and if he had lived single, till he had learned the extent of his own understanding, or the nature of his *frivolous* and *criminal* habits, he would never have supposed, that mere innocence

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and beauty would have satisfied his vagrant, and *licentious* wishes !

Besides, what knowledge can a girl, at *her* age, have of the government of a family, or the arrangement of *domestick* concerns ? Servants will take advantage of her *inexperience* ; and she must either be made a *dupe* to their artifices, or, from a narrow system of jealousy and suspicion, she will lose their *confidence*, and become the object of their *persecution*.

With respect to the *other* case, you mention, with so much concern, it was *equally* probable. People may accustom themselves to speak lightly of religion, in order to be esteemed men of spirit, and, in a thoughtless circle, pass for very excellent companions. But, when a man has a *family*, such a *levity* is infamous. If he *believes* his own principles, he cannot fail to be miserable ; and he will find, that the fence, he wishes to break down, is that, which guards the chastity and affection of a *wife* ; the obedience,

obedience, morals, and attention of *children*; the respect, fidelity and principles of *servants*, and the whole of his affairs from sinking into a terrible ruin and confusion!

The general cause of suicide is a total want, or an unfortunate *fluctuation* of, principle. Without the comforts of religion, what support has any man to lean upon, in the day of trouble? If a person accustoms himself to sceptical reasonings, he believes, by degrees, that there *may* be no future torments for the wicked; and if he can once bring his mind to this unwarrantable persuasion, he will be ready to lay violent hands upon himself, whenever his pride is hurt by any *fanciful* degradation, and he cannot, any longer, support the consequence, for which he has been distinguished by his fellow mortals.

## LETTER XLII.

I WILL now give you the description of an *happier* marriage. I have been spending a few days in a family, who have long lived in my esteem, and of whom you have often heard me speak in terms of veneration.

My friendship with Eugenio, (for so I will call the gentleman,) was formed in those early years, when unsuspicious hearts vibrate to each other, without ceremony or reserve. For his lady, so soon as introduced to her, I felt a very *assimilating* partiality. We mingled souls at our first meeting, and they have, never since, discorded for a moment.

Eugenio is a man of considerable learning, and still greater taste. In every thing, that relates to polite knowledge, he has not many superiors, in his age.



age. He is complete master of musick, painting and poetry. In architecture, his skill is very considerable. In all the phenomena of *natural* history, he is, *professedly*, a connoisseur. The best writers of Greece and Rome lie, constantly, on his table, and amuse many of his leisure hours.

Nature has given to his amiable lady, a superior understanding, which has been improved by a good education, and polished by the best company in the kingdom. Her mother was one of those *uncommon* women, who esteemed it her highest dignity to be *herself* the nurse and governess of her children, and taught them to mingle accomplishments with knowledge, the *ornamental* graces, with domestick assiduity.

I will leave *you* to judge, what must be the consequences of such an union. Think how Eugenio must have improved such a woman! Imagine how this lady must have *blessed* such a man!

In this family, I am quite in my element. I read, stroll, think, or amuse myself without censure or restraint. I feel a sovereign pity for the world of fashion, and forget, that there are any charms in ambition, or any sorrows in disappointment.

Their fortune is just, what it should be, for solid contentment; too little to inspire a fantastick emulation with the manners of the *great* world; too large to admit of embarrassment or want. It is, in short, neither more nor less, than £.1000 *per annum*. Their family consists of two fine boys, and one girl, who is half as amiable, and distinguished, as Louisa.

Though the fashionable world would think such circumstances narrow, yet that economy, which can do *every* thing, has made them very comfortable, and their entire complacency in each other's company, rich indeed! They do not  
dissipate

dissipate their fortune in expensive journeys to, or by residence in, the metropolis, and are too happy in *themselves*, to be frequently seen in any other places of dissipation.

This, my dear Lucy, is the happiest of lives. After all our ambition, and all our struggles, it is chiefly in the *shade*, that we must find contentment. The pleasures *there* are calm; they are pleasures of the *heart*.

Their house is situated, at two miles distance from a considerable town in the county of —, upon an eminence, which commands a full view of the city, but has its aspect to those woods and shades, with which its owners are infinitely more conversant, than the more noisy scenes of dissipated life. Elegant, but not superb, and spacious, though plain, it expresses the cultivated taste of its inhabitants, and the hospitable kindness, that reigns within.

The pleasure grounds and gardens are in that unornamented style, which, to me, is always particularly pleasing. Nature has not been wholly sacrificed to art, nor wildness, to refinement. The wilderness, here and there, presents you with all its shaggy luxuriance, and venerable glooms. You rove imbosomed in woods and thickets, and are mingled, at a distance from every prying eye, in those silent haunts of solitude, which poetry has always decked with its charms. Here the hand of the creator has formed a grotto, and art has not destroyed it; there an alcove, and the pruning knife has not *officiously* separated the intertwining branches. In one place, a little fountain murmurs, at its ease, and nothing has attempted to divert it from its original channel. In another, you have tufted beauties, a cascade, a lawn, an hill, or a valley, beautifully interspersed, exactly as they were formed by the hand of nature, in one of those



more sportive moments, when she wished to please.

Through the branches of a beautiful hanging wood, which lies before the house, you descry the glittering spire of the parish church, belonging to the village, of which Eugenio is the patron, and a very exemplary clergyman, the present incumbent. It is placed on a *rising* ground, as if continually aspiring to that heaven, to which its excellent pastor is always calling the affections of his people. It is built in that gothick style, which I, always, most approved in this sacred kind of structure, as best adapted to inspire the mind with seriousness and devotion. But it is not from the mere beauty of the place, or the deliciousness of its situation, that its enviable owners derive their happiness. They expect not from shrubs or blossoms, or the most enchanting scenery, the pleasures, of the heart. They know, that the richest prospects would soon fade upon the eye,

if they did not derive a fresh and lively bloom from principle *within*.

In an age of levity, this happy pair are not ashamed to be thought religious. They are persuaded, that their blessings could have no *permanency* or relish, if unsanctified with the smile and protection of heaven. Their house is, in fact, a temple, where prayers and praises are, regularly, offered up, every night and morning, to the great Author and preserver of their lives. Every servant is required to attend the service ; and they are all, *occasionally*, instructed in their duties to God and man. They have, likewise, each a little library of devotional tracts, which have been presented to them by their generous superiors. I had the curiosity, one day, to examine the title pages, and found them, principally, to consist of the Great Importance of a Religious Life ; Beveridge's Private Thoughts and Resolutions ; Taylor's Holy Living and Dying ; Advice  
against

against swearing, drunkenness, profaneness, &c. in little tracts from the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; Wilson on the Sacrament; the Christian Pattern; Henry's Pleasantness of a Religious Life, &c.

It would delight you to observe with what a mixture of love and reverence, these servants approach their *real* benefactors. You hear nothing, under *this* roof, of those feuds and animosities, which so much imbitter the happiness of families. "They live, as brethren together in unity." The only contention is, which shall be most ardent, assiduous and vigilant in the performance of their duty.

If Maria (Eugenio's lady,) has the *slightest* indisposition, you might read it, without asking a syllable, in the anxious looks and gestures of all her attendants. She was lately confined with a nervous fever; and it would have astonished you to see the unaffected grief and concern,

cern, expressed in their looks. "What  
" (said they,) will become of our excel-  
" lent master, if he should lose the most  
" amiable woman in the world?"

The piety of these people is the more  
engaging, because it is always *cheerful*  
and serene. It proceeds from *reason*, and  
it encourages no *unnatural* austerity or  
gloom. It is mixed with sentiment; it  
is graced with knowledge, and guided  
by discretion. Who would not pique  
himself on a friendship with such a fa-  
mily? Who would not wish that friend-  
ship to be eternal?

When I have added *you* to the group,  
I fancy myself in possession of almost  
every thing, that mortality can give,  
and wish only the continuance of my en-  
joyments.

LETTER



## LETTER XLII.

MANY people of fortune are uncomfortable in marriage, for want of *employment*, or of something to give an *interest* to the, otherwise, *insipid* uniformity of the same excursions, visits, company, or entertainments. This is never the case within the walls of Eugenio. He is always introducing, from incidents, as they rise, some useful and entertaining topicks of conversation. A news-paper, books, the garden, flowers, plants, shrubs, history, the azure vault of heaven, stars, planets, or even a common *insect*, furnish to this worthy family ample subjects for observation, ever edifying, and ever new. His lady has taste and information enough to enter into the spirit of all these descriptions; and the *general scene* is, not a little, enlivened by the

the mode, in which they treat and educate their children.

My good friend is persuaded, that publick education, as it is *generally* managed, is more calculated to teach languages and science, than to inculcate *principles* or *morals*; and, therefore, keeps his sons at home, till they have acquired a sufficient stock of virtue to serve them as an antidote against the dangers of the world. They have, however, their regular school hours and exercises, which are observed with the most undeviating punctuality. The older of the boys has made a considerable proficiency in the Latin language. He has abridged the English and the Roman histories, and is completely versed in heathen mythology. But, above all, he is instructed in the fundamentals of religion, and of his duty to God and man. The scriptures make a part of his daily reading; and the sensible parent embellishes them with such a number of striking observations,

various, as greatly interest the *curiosity*, and fix the attention of his unvitiated pupil.

With Rollin's *Belles Lettres*, and the Abbe Millot's *Elementes sur l'histoire*, he is perfectly acquainted. The latter he is abridging; and *Telemachus* is warmly pressed on his attention, as containing those immortal lessons of virtue, which alone can dignify any character or station.

Eugenio has been at the pains of throwing select parts of Seneca, Marcus Antoninus, and the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, into an English dress, for the advantage of his little family. He has selected a system of *Ethicks*, and almost of *Divinity*, from the entertaining works of Addison, Johnson, *The World*, &c; and the arrangement is so excellent, that it ought to be made *publick* for the benefit of mankind.

The first morning, that I spent under this happy roof, I was awakened from my slumbers

slumbers by the soft, harmonious voice of Miss —, who was chanting, to the harpsicord, an early hymn of gratitude and devotion to her merciful Creator. It was taken from the Spectator.

When all thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys;  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love and praise.

The whole reminded me of the words of an ingenious poet:

J'entends encore sa voix, ce langage enchanteur,  
Et ces sons souverains de l'oreille et du cœur.

Her voice, th'enchancing language, *still* I hear,  
Those sovereign accents of the heart, and ear.

This is her constant practice, every morning, at six o'clock; and it has the happiest effect on her temper and spirits, for the rest of the day. It soothes the soul to harmony, and cherishes all the gentler emotions.

Immediately after this was finished, the lovely girl took a walk into the garden, as she regularly does, when the weather



weather will permit, to observe the gradual progress, health and vegetation of her plants and flowers. I requested the honour of attending her, and was amazed, young as she is, with her knowledge of natural history, and with the judicious remarks she made on the power and goodness, on the wisdom and contrivance of the magnificent Creator.

Before breakfast, Maria (their mother,) hears all the children together read the psalms and lessons for the day. To this pious exercise I was not invited; but I doubt not, it was a specimen of female eloquence, descanting on the vanity of every thing, but devotion, and glancing at the dangers and temptations of the world.

The employment of this good family is as strict, as usual, and not less pleasing, even upon Sundays.

The *first* exercise of this day, after the accustomed hymn of praise to their Creator, is to abridge a few pages of  
Wilson's

Wilson's Indian Instructed, or of Secker's Lectures on the Catechism. After the service, all the children give in, to the best of their power, an account of the sermon, which they have heard. The comparison of their different merits is pleasing, and the very *contest* excites emulation.

When *this* is finished, their father instructs them with a short *comment* on the lessons for the day. One happened to be the history of *Dives and Lazarus*. Very few have greater powers of the pathetick, than my friend. He brought them all to tears with dwelling on the pitiable circumstances of the *beggar*, and poured this lesson into their *softened* minds, that riches are *apt* to harden the heart, and have no real dignity or use, but as employed in acts of *mercy* to our *neighbour*. He gave, to the parable at large, a new and *singular* aspect. He observed, that luxury had led Dives to unbelief, and

and that unbelief had plunged him into hell.

On *another* occasion, he dwelt on the scriptural history of Haman. In him, he expatiated on the uncertainty and fickleness of all outward greatness, and the insufficiency of honours, stations, popularity, to confer any *real* happiness on a mind, that had not submitted to *internal* government, and the discipline of religion.

“What a trifle (said he,) deranged this great man’s enjoyment! Because poor Mordecai would not bow to his pomp, his honours lost their flavour, and his dignities their charm; his sleep went from him, and he refused to be comforted. If his passions had been subdued, and his soul regenerated with divine grace, he would have been contented in the lowest obscurity. A cottage would have given him more satisfaction than this palace. It would have been irradiated

diated with hope, and it would have smiled with divine consolations."

Eugenio is constant at *church*, and his deportment there is an excellent pattern to all his dependents. His features are marked with a serious fervour, and a cheerful dignity, when he is humbly presenting his supplications to the Author of his being.

You would be charmed to see how the honest peasants dwell on his looks! what eulogies are expressed in every countenance! What fervent blessings are poured forth, when he stops to inquire about their families and concerns, and what earnest wishes, that his mansion may long retain *him* for its owner, and that his countenance amongst them may be lasting as their days!

Not behind him in any of the *milder* virtues, his consort *looks up* to him, with a conscious inferiority, as the pride of her heart. Blended with more *softness*, her piety is, if possible, still more engaging;



gaging; but she seems to decline all *personal* consequence, and to be wholly absorbed in the superior lustre of his character and virtues. She receives the prayers and blessings of their tenants, as if only due to the man of her affections; and, though the zeal of the populace would convey her, in their *arms*, yet, when Eugenio offers his hand to lift her into the carriage, her eyes sparkle with peculiar cheerfulness, and strongly express both her love and gratitude to her protector and her friend.

It is no wonder that they are so much admired. No wonder that every tongue loads them with blessings. This is but the *speculative* part of their piety; the *practical* is more useful and more engaging. They love their God; they love their Redeemer, and for his sake, they go about doing good. Not a tenant experiences an uncomfortable year, but he receives a considerable abatement in his rent. Not a person is injured in all the neighbourhood,

neighbourhood, but his cause is pleaded, and his wrongs are redressed. Not an old man exists, but he has something, by way of *pension*, from this virtuous family, to ease his infirmities, and pillow his declining age. Not a great man endeavours to take advantage of a lesser, but my friend, who is an excellent lawyer, undertakes the business, and exposes the oppressor to his merited contempt.

Every hour, that Maria can spare from her particular domestick employments, is spent in making garments, providing cordials, physick, and accommodations, for the naked, the sick and indigent of her village; and there are times of the day, in which you would conclude, from the vast concourse of people, that their house was a professed *asylum* for poverty and distress.

But now comes out *the great secret of their happiness*: “Alas!” said this good man to me, one night, after supper, when he was reviewing the actions of the  
the

the day, " your obliging partiality thinks  
" me happy, and so indeed I *am*. In  
" the tenderness, friendship, fidelity and  
" discretion of my Maria, I have more  
" than the treasures even of a world.  
" But this sweet abode would soon cease  
" to please, and the lovely woman lose  
" the greater part of her charms, if we  
" were not both animated with christian  
" sentiments, and if we did not contrive  
" to relieve the *sameness* and to dignify  
" the *littleness* of life by the activities  
" of virtue. That divine philanthropy,  
" which is the essence of religion, is  
" the source of *our* pleasures. And,  
" when I drop into the grave, I shall  
" have but one single wish, that this  
" amiable guide may be spared to my  
" offspring, and that the poor may pro-  
" nounce a last panegyrick on me, with  
" their prayers and tears. But how very  
" selfish and how cruel is the desire !  
" What would become of the, *then*,  
" lonely and disconsolate Maria ? Alas !

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M

" continually

“ continually together in this retirement,  
“ continually endeared by growing acts  
“ of tendernefs, you cannot think how  
“ very much our hearts are united!  
“ But *this* is the condition of all *human*  
“ happinefs. The tenderest love muft  
“ feel the bitterest pangs from a fepa-  
“ ration. It is the decree of infinite  
“ wisdom, that this world fhould have  
“ no unmixed fatisfaction, to put us on  
“ *earnestly* seeking it in one, which is  
“ unfading and eternal.”

These are the sentiments of as *fine* a gentleman, as the age can boast; of one, who would do honour to the politest circles, and has power to charm the most improved understandings. But *that* gentleman is a *christian*. He has learned to sacrifice all glitter and accomplishments at the banners of the cross. And *this* has made him so charitable a landlord, so active a patron, so tender an husband, so agreeable a companion, so indulgent a parent, and so valuable a friend.



friend. Read this, ye conceited *coxcombs*, who fancy that the character of gentleman consists in *levity* or *wickedness*, and blush at your mistake!

## LETTER XLIII.

I CANNOT fully satisfy your inquiry.

So far, however, as scripture and reason will be our guides, I will endeavour to accompany you into the pleasing speculation.

To you, who have buried so many dear and amiable friends, and had so *short* an enjoyment of them *here*, it is natural to inquire, what you may see, or know of them *hereafter*; whether you shall be able to *recognize* departed spirits after death, and wherein the joys of heaven will consist.

It is plain from sacred writ, that our present, *earthly*, will be changed into

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*glorious,*

*glorious*, bodies, and our souls, as it were, sublimed or *re-modified*, as necessary to the enjoyment of future bliss, *whatever* it may be. Whilst therefore we are, in *part*, composed of *matter*, it is impossible that we should have a *full* conception, or that any *adequate* representation can be conveyed to us in *words*, of the real nature and *essence* of such pleasures, as in fact, are only adapted to minds of a much superior texture, and bodies of a more celestial and *divine* organization. Thus the scriptural images “of thrones, sceptres, kingdoms, of “shining as the stars of the firmament, “of being clothed in white robes, and “having palms in our hands, of feeding “in green pastures, and being led beside living fountains of waters,” are not to be understood, as constituting any thing of the *real quality* of future happiness, but as imperfectly shadowing forth, by the *analogy* of sensible objects, joys, which, both in their *nature* and *degree*,

*degree*, are wholly raised above our *present* comprehension.

So strong and literally just is that passage; " Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things, which God has prepared for them, that love him."

The same idea is, in some degree, intended by St. Paul, when he says, that, " when carried up into the third heaven, he heard things, which it was impossible for man to utter:" he had, it should seem, the *idea* of them, but could not convey it, in *human* words, to the *human* understanding. It is sufficient for us to know, that these delights will be of a *spiritual* nature, proceeding from the supreme, all-perfect *spirit*, and adapted to the fullest capacities of those, he has been pleased to *glorify*; that they will be exquisite, as unbounded power and wisdom and goodness can bestow, and

lasting, as the days of that *eternal* heaven, in which they spring.

That we shall be able to recognize *spirits*, and amongst others, those of our nearest *intimates* after death, is *probable* from the very nature of the soul, which cannot be supposed to lose its *consciousness* or *recollection*, whilst the body is sleeping in the dust of the earth—from the possibility, that an exquisite part of future happiness will arise from reviewing, along with *present* friends, the trials, temptations, and sorrows, which we overcame, along with them, upon earth——and, more especially, from the attributes of God, which seem *pledged* to convince us by, (as it were,) *ocular* demonstration, that those, who, we are well assured, suffered undeservedly, in various methods here, are rewarded hereafter, and that some guilty persons, who wanted no prosperities in *this* world, experience all the horrors of another.



To this doctrine, there is but one weak, and ill-founded objection; that witnessing the misery of friends, if they died in a sinful state, must be a dreadful abatement of our own felicity. That is impossible. The affection betwixt relatives *here* was implanted only for *temporary* purposes, and will, in some cases, cease after death. The only attachment, *then*, will be, (as the only *rational* one, *always was*,) to souls, that *assimilate* in *real wisdom, purity and goodness*. We shall love, in our degree, even as *God* loveth, not with the weakness of passion or instinct, but the unchangeable sublimity of *order*. “They, that do the  
“will of our Father in heaven, will be  
“our fathers and brethren, our sisters  
“and mothers.”

How glorious and inexhaustible a source of happiness does such a prospect open to the mind! With what rapture will a tender mother, who left a number of children behind her, with a thousand,

anxious apprehensions for their safety, meet them in heaven, where their innocence is crowned, their trials are finished, and their eternal happiness secured! With what dutiful transports will children embrace the religious parent, to whose counsels, *under Providence*, they owe, considerably, their present glorification! And what delight must it give both parties to reflect, that death can, no more, divorce them from each other, nor a grain of sorrow poison their cup of bliss! Affectionate brothers and sisters, *unavoidably* severed *here*, by various, important exigencies, with what ardour will they renew their natural connection, and reciprocate each other's joys! Not a fear to rise upon their future prospects, not a cloud to darken the celestial sky!

*Another* delightful idea of heaven is, that it will bring to *maturity* all those amiable instincts, which were planted in us by the Deity, whilst we were on earth, but from a multitude of obstacles,

or

or the shortness of life, could not attain their perfection.

Our strong thirst for happiness, it is, on all hands, allowed, that was only mocked in a world of *shadows*, will be fully gratified in one of glory. It will, probably, be so with our passion for knowledge—friendship—society—which, when properly directed, are equally virtuous and useful propensities, and, therefore, alike proceed from the Author of every perfect gift.

How eagerly do some men thirst after knowledge, but how much are they retarded in the pursuit, by the imperfection of their present organs, the weakness of their bodily frame, by the long, lost space of childhood and old age, by the want of books, acquaintance, and other opportunities, or by the transitoriness of life itself!—or when all human advantages center in one, privileged man, enlightened as he may *seem*, what is his wisdom, but compara-

tive folly? When contrasted with the immensity of science, and the inexhaustible wonders of creation, what does it resemble, but a grain, an atom, a drop of water, or a particle of sand on the sea shore? Here we see but through "a glass darkly." A Newton and a Locke, after all their improvements, felt and confessed this *poverty* of soul.

But how sublime will be the pleasures of this intercourse in heaven, when the greatest men, that have ever lived, are all collected together from all quarters of the world! When there are no little envies, jealousies, interests or bigotries to interrupt their mutual concord and improvements! nor any languor, fatigue or disease in the renovated frame! When the Almighty shall have unlocked all the treasures of his wisdom, all the secrets of his government, and the wonders of his grace! When the soul shall have received such fresh and superior inlets of intelligence, and "we shall know,



know, even as we are known." The wonderful page of nature will then be plain. The book of Providence will open, in the most legible characters, on the enlarged mind. That mystery of redemption, into which the very angels have been desirous to look, will be unfolded, in all its abysses; and the consequence of such discoveries must be an inexpressible sensation of love, astonishment and rapture. "We shall not cease, "day or night, to worship him, that "sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, "that has washed us from our sins, in his "own blood."

The case, in all *probability*, will be the same with *friendship*. Friendship, balm of this uneasy state! inspirer of virtuous thoughts and counsels! medicine of life! still chequered, still imperfect upon earth, mixed with caprice, with passion, with insincerity, and often chilled by death, (thousands of *congenial* souls prevented by seas, mountains, reserve of

fex, bigotries of religion, peculiarities of education, from ever *uniting*,) this friendship shall, *there*, have all its fullest poignancy, and flourish in immortal bloom! The amiable of all ages and nations shall be assembled together, frailties and death, and the *possibility* of separation, wholly done away!

Think only of the expansion and luxury the mind enjoys from unbofoming its pleasures or sorrows to a person upon earth, from the social glow and confidential conversation! and imagine, for a moment, what this privilege must be, where all around us are friends—where friends are angels—and angels are continually imbibing fresh streams of knowledge, of purity and graces in the presence of their God!

Our *social* instinct likewise, will, doubtless, have a *similar* gratification. People are drawn together into *societies* on *earth*, by a similarity of tastes, pursuits, habits and improvements. The principle

principle is *natural*, and has many *laudable* effects; and, from the nature of the human soul, which will, probably, be going through successive stages of improvement to all eternity, may be supposed likely to *continue* in a glorified state. Thus, though holiness and purity be the *alone* medium of *admission* into these blessed mansions, yet societies may be formed of people of similar improvements and congenial tastes; of holy philosophers, (suppose,) naturalists, divines, doubly endeared by this resemblance, and carrying their various researches to perfection, in a world, where knowledge is totally unobstructed, and in the presence of him, from whom all wisdom and all goodness flows. Whilst the different mansions of heaven may resemble, on this principle, the scattered groups of stars in the firmament, and administer that charming and exquisite variety, which seems to be the wonderful



ful plan of Providence through the *whole* creation.

Thus much, at least, may be fairly inferred, that the *intellectual* improvements, we have made *here*, will not *perish* in the *grave*. We shall, doubtless, in this respect, rise with the same views and *habits of thinking*, with which we died. How much men at present, differ, from this cause alone, so that the *least*, and the *most* enlightened, almost appear creatures of *another species*, needs not be observed. And, though a Boyle or a Bacon, would from an union in *goodness* only, be happy in the conversation of the most illiterate saint, yet, on all principles of *analogy*, it may, reasonably, be presumed, that their bliss could not fail to be infinitely heightened by the society of those, who, like them, had spent a whole life in laudable investigations.

But the *grand* idea is, that the "great I AM will be present!" He, who is the source of all perfection and blessings! He, who



who can open, in the mind, innumerable avenues of *inconceivable* enjoyment! Whose whole creation is but a ray, emaning from the plenitude of his happiness and glory, and who will certainly give his children all, that their *enlarged* faculties can admit, of pleasure and fruition.

Here we are continually mocked with the *appearance* of happiness, which, on trial, is always found checkered with ill. Here the sweetest odour has attendant briars; the most delicious landscape has its shade; the most, apparently, finished enjoyment, its alloy. Even the sweet, engaging child and friend, dear to us, as our own souls, bring inseparable anxieties, and a thousand unquiet apprehensions for their health, their innocence and peace. Every enviable acquisition is followed with its trouble; every accession of fortune or interest, with its cares; and, in the height of *seeming*, worldly bliss, trouble, still, will find, through various

ous *chinks*, its moments of admission. But, in heaven, all will be unmixed, all will be perfect; all will be serene!

Such is my private opinion of heaven. Such is the paradise of my *imagination*. If it be innocent, I have a right to indulge it; if you think it *visionary*, you are at liberty to reject it. If it be an *error*, it is, at least, a pleasing one; and, if it serves to comfort life, or excite us to any laudable improvements, it has its uses in society, and must, *ultimately*, promote the glory of God.

I hope it is true, because time, which dissolves all earthly things, is ever on the wing, and I wish to have my intimacy with *you*, perpetuated through immortality.

LETTER

## LETTER XLIV.

I AM truly concerned for your indisposition. Your nerves are relaxed, and your spirits cannot fail to be affected in proportion. The complaints of this age, principally, arise from inactivity and over-indulgence. We thwart nature, in a thousand instances, and, in as many, she retaliates the offence.

We almost *dissolve* in hot, carpeted rooms, instead of continually exposing our bodies to the open air. We go to sleep, when we should be rising. We invent *artificial* methods of provoking an appetite, which can only be excited, in a proper manner, by labour and application. And *factitious* amusements are vainly bidden to create those spirits, which should arise from exercise and air.

This may answer a *temporary* purpose, but, in the *end*, it would destroy the firmest

firmest constitution. It is, in fact, undermining the very ground, upon which we stand, and digging a *premature* grave under our feet.

To me, who follow nature, and am only a spectator of the bustling scenes around me, these things appear to have serious consequences. When I look at fine, enervated ladies, I tremble, by a sort of *involuntary* instinct, for the rising generation.

What a vigilant, *systematick* care did the ancient legislators bestow upon this sex! To give them an healthy, vigorous constitution, and to consult, in *particular situations*, their ease and cheerfulness, was an object not beneath the attention of those heroes, who, by their valour and their talents, governed the world.

If you intend to have any comfort yourself, or be of any solid usefulness to others, you must be careful of your health. It is a plant, that requires continual



tinual nursing, and without the greatest attention, will *gradually* die.

You must not dissolve on *downy* pillows, till your frame is almost thrown into convulsions. You should rise with the *dawn*, and exercise gently in the open air, particularly, on horse-back. A little cheerful company will amuse, and keep your mind, from preying too much upon itself. Too much, on the other hand, will *oppress* your spirits, and aggravate your complaints.

Above all, if you wish a removal of your present indisposition, you must cautiously abstain from tea, particularly in mornings. However agreeable this beverage may be, it is, doubtless, the source of weak nerves, hysterical and hypochondriack affections, and of half those dreadful, *paralytick* symptoms, which have lately become so general and alarming.

Instead of *languishing* in elegant rooms, you should frequently be strolling into the fields or garden, if you would avoid the  
bitter

bitter draught of an apothecary, or innocently rob the physician of his fee. Your *diet* should be simple and moderate, confined to one dish, and that rather animal, than vegetable. You should eat sparingly, but *often*, and “ use a little wine for your “ stomach’s sake, and your, often, infir-  
“ mities.” The town has, doubtless, contributed to your disorder. When you return into the country, its pure air, I trust, and tranquil scenes will considerably restore you. Nature never intended such multitudes of people to be crowded together, and breathe the infinite, noxious effluvia of great cities. They are, in fact, the graves of mankind. We may *exist* in them for a time; but it is only in the country, that health has any thing of its natural vigour, or life, of its enjoyment.

Do not *tamper* with your constitution. The whole power of medicine, in *your* case, does not afford the shadow of relief. Disorders of this kind baffle all the penetration of the medical fraternity. When  
they

they pronounce our case *nervous*, it is only saying, in so many words, that they cannot give us any adequate assistance.

The very nature, form, or texture of the nerves are, to this day, by no means, clearly ascertained, or fully understood. Perhaps, they compose that subtil and amazing union of body and soul, of matter and spirit, which eludes all inquiry. When they are disordered, I know no method, but to avoid all extremes, to fly into the country and keep the mind, if *possible*, easy and serene.

## L E T T E R XLV.

**I**F I had the opportunity, it would give me great pleasure to be of your party to Bath. But indeed I am quite fixed and stationary here; unable to move, or visit even my nearest friends. Every day brings, along with it, a train of engagements; and almost every hour, substantial duties, that cannot be omitted.

Nature,



Nature, at times, is disposed to repine, and think such confinement an intolerable hardship, till I begin to reflect, that all durable pleasure is derived from employment, and that the only, real *dignity* of life consists *in doing good*.

They, who are *continually* in motion, and varying the scene, are not, that I can discover, more satisfied than myself. They carry their private burdens, along with them, over hills and mountains; and, when they have exhausted the whole circle of pleasures, still there is a great void in the soul.

I was once, for five weeks, at Bath, and recollect it with a mixture of gratitude and pleasure. It was, particularly, serviceable to my health; and, on the whole, made impressions on my mind, that will never be erased.

The very *ride* to this place will amazingly revive you. Worcestershire, at this season of the year, is one grand magnificent garden, whose air is perfume, whose  
scenery



scenery is blossoms, and whose walls are the spacious canopy of heaven. If you make Bristol in your way, I dare promise, that your curiosity will be amply gratified by a sight of that ancient and extensive city. Though the place, *in itself*, is low and dirty, yet the adjacent country is, perhaps, the most picturesque and beautiful in Britain. Clifton Hill is deliciously romantick; on one side, commanding a full prospect of the city, and looking, on the other, towards that magnificent ocean, which brings the inhabitants, all their merchandize and riches. At the foot of this eminence, you will descry the medicinal springs of the hot wells, so celebrated for their efficacy in *consumptive* cases. Here you will be shocked with a number of walking *skeletons*, who are yellow with sickness, dying of consumptions, and breathing, in their sighs, the emptiness and vanity of all human things. Thus is no human pleasure to be unmixed; and thus are thorns to be intertwined with the rose.

King's

King's Weston Hill, in the environs of this place, has lately been celebrated by a poet. But the copy comes not up to the original. Nature has painted better, than the bard. It is visited by all strangers, not only for its *own*, magnificent beauties, and wonderful scenery, but as an opportunity of beholding the sea, which *here* opens, all at once, in a grand and unexpected expansion, on the astonished eye. If you are fortunate enough to have a fine day, you cannot behold a more sublime or striking curiosity.

When you arrive at your journey's end, every thing will delight you. Regular streets, magnificent buildings, sumptuous, publick rooms, delightful prospects, walks, hills, vallies, fountains, gardens, company, amusements—all will proclaim, that you are at Bath. You will feel, that this is the *paradise* of Britain; and that the goddess of health has *here*, more particularly, fixed her abode. The mind, it is true, carries its secret burdens

dens with it, into every situation ; but I know no place more calculated to efface melancholy impressions, or do away the bad effects of over-exertion. The waters are a wonderful cordial to the stomach, and a powerful remover of that indigestion, which, to the studious and the fair of *sedentary* lives, is become so very general a complaint ; and the mind, insensibly, loses its little, *fanciful* burdens in the *general* gaiety and sprightliness of the scene. There are, it must be confessed, many *invalids* ; but there are, likewise, multitudes of young people of both sexes, whose manners are very highly engaging, and whose faces wear a perpetual smile.

The amusements, to which you are admitted at a very moderate expence, are conducted with the strictest order and decorum ; and in the charms and splendour of a ball, as it is managed *here*, one would be led to fancy, that life was wholly composed of pleasure, if it did not occur, that all this brilliant throng have their



private vexations, and the heart its own bitterness *within*.

The Abbey church pleases *me* more, than almost any sacred edifice I have seen in the kingdom. It has not the grandeur and *magnificence* of some others, but it is more calculated for use, and yields to none, in elegance and neatness.

Lady H——'s chapel is visited by all strangers, as an elegant curiosity of the *solemn* kind, more, perhaps, from the melody and sweetness of the singing, than motives of devotion. The good woman, probably, founded it in this bosom of pleasure, with a view of calling sinners of *distinction* to repentance. Her intention was amiable; and her piety, though grounded on the narrow and intolerant principles of Calvin, is entitled to respect. When people openly give their money, zeal, talents and labour to *any* cause, we may trust their *sincerity*. Nor should criticism expose the little, *involuntary* errors of those, who scrupulously act up to the dic-



tates of their conscience, and have, thus literally, "left all and followed Christ."

Lady H——, it is said, has much injured her private fortune by her religious generosity; in building chapels, supporting preachers, and many other publick, and private donations. Prudence, surely, did not warrant so extravagant a sacrifice. But it is not necessary to expose a conduct, which so few will ever be disposed to imitate. *Over-righteousness*, is not by any means, the sin of *this* age.

I was indeed, not a little disgusted with the preacher of the evening, on which I happened to be at her ladyship's chapel. His discourse was a *violent*, inflammatory harangue without elegance, reasoning or connection; and consisted, for the greater part, of a severe abuse of the *established* clergy. We *are*, perhaps, *too* languid and remiss in the discharge of our duty; but to expose with *virulence* and rancour, is not, surely, the method to *reform* us. Declamation or satire irritates. It is

solid argument alone, mixed with love and gentleness, which softens and converts.

These people have not the *gracefulness* of piety. They display not in their looks or manner, or *censures*, the "beauty of holiness." A severe critick, perhaps, would accuse them of spiritual pride, and give them this motto, "Stand from me, for I am holier than thou." Their preachers appear deficient in general knowledge. They do not study force of argument or embellishments of style. They are not, indeed, without zeal; but it is wild, extravagant and frantick. They do not seem "pitiful or courteous, or to be possessed of that charity, which thinketh no evil."

The greatest disgrace to Bath are the *gambling parties* at the lower rooms. Would you believe it possible? You may see people of the first distinction, who are actuated with the *infernal* rage of play, mixing with a set of the very lowest, mercenary sharpers! One would suppose that their pride and taste alone would not submit

mit to such a *degradation*. But so little is all station, when it has forgotten its *real* dignity; so groveling is the human mind, when it has lost sight of the true source of happiness, and “is hewing out for itself, “broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Even Chesterfield himself, with all his *parade of graces*, was a dupe to this most abominable practice!

The Avon, which runs through this city, filled me with great ideas. Shakespeare, Stratford, the Jubilee, immortal talents and immortal fame rushed into my mind, as often as I saw its soft, flowing stream roll silently along.

I should wish you to take a view of Prior Park, as a place, which has so long been sacred to science and the muses. The late Mr. Allen was the Mæcenas of his times. You cannot tread the ground about it, without recollecting many of those celebrated wits, who were often invited to this hospitable retreat, and entertained its possessor with all that luxury of taste



taste and luscious flow of soul, which genius inspires.

A great character stamps an immortality on the places, he frequents, or the houses, he inhabits. Prior Park will be remembered, when its elegance is mouldered. *Fancy* will plant a laurel round this mansion of taste, which will continue to be green, when the mansion itself shall have crumbled into atoms.

You will much oblige me by a frequency of letters, whilst you are at Bath. They will improve your own talent at the *descriptive*. To me they will give a more lively recollection of pleasures, which I *once* enjoyed. They will retrace upon my mind, agreeable scenes and images, which I have, *formerly*, beheld. They will interest an heart, that always vibrates to *your* pleasures or your pains. They will relieve spirits, that are too much oppressed by a variety of thoughts. *Whilst* I read them, I shall forget, that I had ever a complaint, or that I ever was unhappy.

5 MA 56  
THE END.



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